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# PC

## ZONE

# BIOFORGE

Exclusive Review



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in this  
issue:

\*Descent\*Heretic\*Lost Eden\*  
\*Mortal Kombat II\*  
\*Flight Unlimited\*Iron Assault\*  
\*Top Gun\*Virtual Pool\*  
\*Across the Rhine\*

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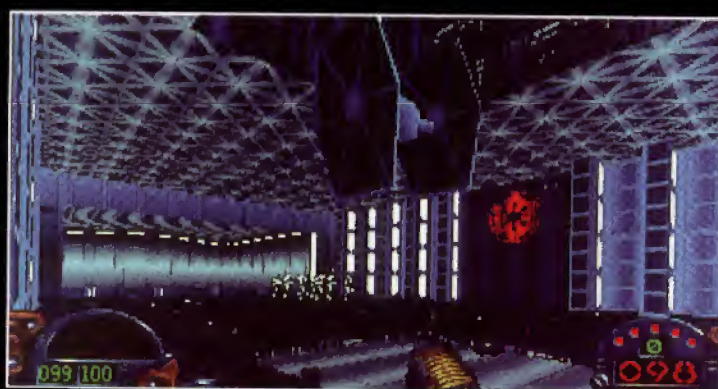
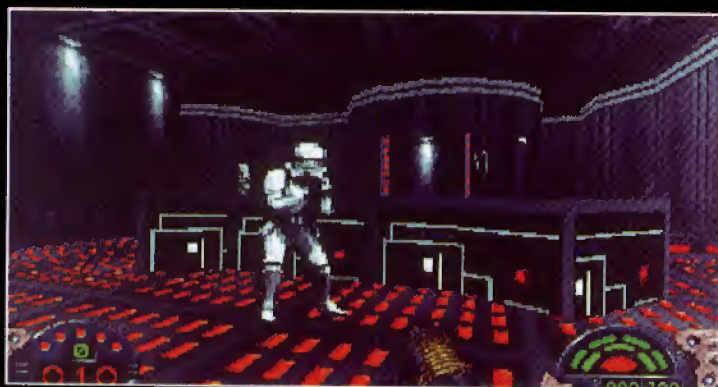


# STAR WARS DARK FORCES

CAN YOU SMELL THE FOUL STENCH OF EVIL?

CAN YOU LOOK DEATH AND DISTRESS IN THE FACE?

ARE YOU READY TO FACE THE DARK SIDE?



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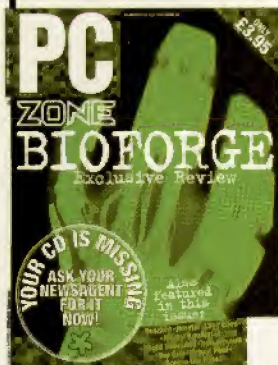
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STAR WARS UNIVERSE





# dir.ectory



● This month's cover (apart from being dead arty and flash) is the box art from Origin's *BioForge* featuring an x-ray of the hero's cybernetically altered hand.

**PC ZONE**



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ARGUABLY THE BEST flight simulation ever produced. It looks gorgeous, plays like a dream and I think our reviewer actually wet himself whilst playing it.

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THE FOLLOW UP to Nippon Safes... arrgh! Hang on a minute, though, this looks like it could be quite good.

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MICROPROSE STOP PLAYING around in aeroplanes for a while and have a bash at a tanky-tanky thing.

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THE GAME OF THE FILM comes a bit later than expected. Could this turn out to be MicroProse's best?

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# PC ZONE

100%  
GAMES

April 1995 Issue Twenty Five

## COVER DISK

### HD Disk Version

#### XCOM – Terror from the Deep

This is the sequel to MicroProse's award-winning *UFO*. You and your team of hand-picked mercenaries the only things that stand in the way of an alien take over. In this unique and fully-playable mission you have to secure and clean out an alien stronghold. The catch? It's at the bottom of the sea.



### CD-ROM Version

Okay, this is definitely the very last time we do this (honest). The final *Doom* show-down, with over 1000 levels, editors, patches, *Doom*-clones, you name it, we've got it.

There are also exclusive playable demos, such as *Jungle Strike*, *Inferno*, *XCOM*, *MetalTech: Battledrome* and *Noctropolis*. Also included are demos of *Premier Manager 3*, *Dark Forces* and a whole lot more.

And for those of you with a modem, there's *Ameol*, which will connect you to CIX and the amazing PC Zone conference.



# Bulletin

## Star Trek to be Doomed!!!



WHILST MOST TREKKIES will be secretly licking their wounds and putting on a brave face after seeing the abysmal *Generations* (mumbling things about lack of budget, a deep and meaningful sub-plot that revolves around Picard

actually wanting dear Tiberius dead while he's in the Nexus, and something about the next one being much better), they can now seek solace in the fact that the new release *Star Trek - The Next Generation: A Final Unity* from MicroProse is the best *Star Trek* adventure ever, and that all is well in the world as *Voyager* is now on the telly.

If the film was a bit of a let down, there is a silver lining in the galactic cloud. Rumour has it that Spectrum HoloByte (sister company of MicroProse, the people who have the license from Paramount to do all the TNG stuff) is currently working on a 3D space combat game, which is loosely based on the film *Generations*.

Although details are sketchy at the moment, it is understood that the player will be able to skoot around the universe, zapping Romulans and (this is the best bit) then land on one of the many planets or enemy craft while indulging in a bit of 3D shoot 'em up action à la *Doom*. Initial reports suggest that it will be more like *System Shock* with a fair bit of strategy and puzzle solving thrown in to remain in-keeping with the Trekkie tradition of "might isn't necessarily always right". Although it will use the *Generations* license, the game will not focus on the main plot of the film (you mean, there was one?), but will include most of the characters from the film (Malcolm McDowell is already rumoured to have expressed an interest) and will be jolly good. Make it so!



## DESCENT II

**D**espite the fact that *Descent* has only just been released, Interplay has already confirmed that there will be a sequel to the game, which will be launched before the end of the year. No details have been confirmed as yet, but there are rumours that the sequel will incorporate full SVGA graphics and further enhancements for the virtual reality support.

Speaking to representatives from Interplay, *PC Zone* can reveal that the intention with the sequel is to produce something "significantly different to the original". It seems that the development team has been tracking *Doom*'s progress and is disappointed with the fact that the game hasn't changed much in its different incarnations. Although *Descent II* will be a 3D flying/shoot 'em up, it won't necessarily be set in the confines of a tunnel system, and there is a distinct possibility that much of the action may take place "outside", with far more complicated polygons for the enemy creatures.

*PC Zone* will be bringing you more news of the project in the next few months, and, all being well, the game will be sneakily previewed at the E3 show in Los Angeles in May.



## LITTLE PEOPLE

**Y**et another "God" game but this time from a new perspective. Whereas *Sim City* and *Civilization* require the player to make changes from the top down i.e. create a landscape, build a city, forge trade links etc., to change the world, *Little People* is on a much more personal level.

Instead of building cityscapes, players must do things that directly and indirectly effect a small population and thereby achieve set goals, such as make Johnny and Mary fall in love, inspire Tony to run for parliament, prevent Alice from being knocked over while shopping in the high street - all at the same time. There will probably be around 60 different characters, all with their own personalities, hopes and dreams for you to meddle with, and the game will use an *X-COM* type view which the player can scroll around. You'll even be able to move the planets around in an attempt to change people's moods, as well as the weather and other environmental forces.

It may sound a little odd, but initial appearances suggest something not a million miles away from last year's hit *Theme Park*. *Little People* is due for release in the summer from MicroProse.



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## Bulletin



(Left) The best just gets better. Falcon 4.0 will use the same graphical interface as Top Gun and will feature a real-time "virtually generated" playing environment.

## DISPATCHES

## +++ QUAKE CAUSES PC PRICE FEAR

The word on the street is "Buy now or pay more," according to one computer manufacturer who claims that the recent earthquake in Kobe, Japan, will send prices rising.

MJN Technology maintains that the cost of memory chips has already soared more than 20 per cent since the quake and that production problems could lead to a slow take up of Microsoft's Windows '95. The new graphical-user interface is due for launch later this year, and its operation is said to eat up a massive 8MB. Most systems in the UK are currently sold with only 4MB and upgrades could therefore be pretty costly.

Fortunately, MJN has secured a large stockpile of chips, so if you're thinking of upgrading your system, give them a ring on 0282 777555.

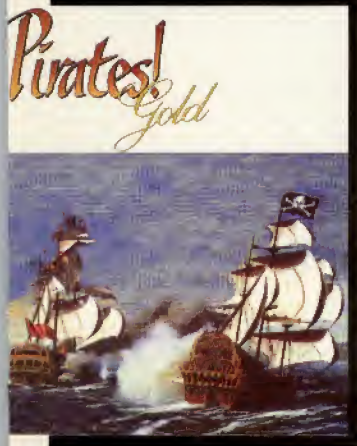
PC Zone refuses to accept any speculation that the recent environmental disasters in the Far East and in Europe have been engineered by a certain software company which is now running out of excuses as to why its much hyped graphical-user interface is running so late.

## +++ AHOY! PIRATES ON THE STARBOARD BOW!

MicroProse is currently working on a Gold version of the old classic *Pirates!*, the award-winning action adventure.

The enhanced version will incorporate FMV, a slicker user interface and there's even talk of using old movie clips of men in tights swashbuckling their way into the sunset to liven the whole thing up. The game is also one of the latest to feature the new 'Play & Learn' on-line player help service that actually teaches the player to play the game as they play it.

*Pirates! Gold* is due for release in the spring.



# FALCON 4.0

## For Christmas



**T**HE FLIGHT SIM that everyone's been waiting for, *Falcon 4.0*, has now been slated for release late this autumn. Developers Spectrum HoloByte are currently busy working on completely new code and is re-designing the sim from top to bottom.

Details are still sketchy at the moment, but we do know that the new sim will incorporate the same artwork used in Spectrum's combat sim *Top Gun* and will be marketed at the intermediate/expert combat pilots who are already familiar with the *Falcon* series and the rather intense and complicated gameplay involved.

Using their already extensive knowledge of flight sims, the programmers hope to make the game easier to learn by incorporating on-line game support in an attempt to lessen the rather steep learning curve, whilst still maintaining a high degree of realism and authenticity. They are also aiming to reduce the high-player work load and the sometimes lengthy ETA involved to reach a kill in an effort to make the sim more user-friendly.

The game will make use of a "virtual environment" for the player to walk around and interact with, while newcomers will be "greeted" and given a tour of the operations centre by actors with a view to familiarising themselves with the 3D environment and the current military climate.

On starting the game, characters will be given a rank and, after some initial training, will be asked to join one of the many squadrons who specialise in either air combat, bombing missions or both. Successful players will be rewarded with medals and promotion for completing specific missions, and as their rank goes up their responsibilities will become more intense.

The game will run in true real time, which means that you can suddenly come under attack while walking around the base and apparently boasts a high level of AI. The operations area is currently limited to the Korean theatre (others are being worked on simultaneously) and the team is particularly keen to beef up the air-to-ground combat campaign so that it matches the high standard of air-to-air combat that has made the *Falcon* series so successful.

For those unfamiliar with the finer complexities of an F-16, there will also be an on-line flight tutor that will teach the novice exactly how to fly and engage in various combat manoeuvres. Players will also be given the option of flying with an instructor sitting firmly in the back seat, who will give advice and help control the weapon and navigation systems. Seems like they've thought of everything, doesn't it? Contact MicroProse on 01454 326532.



# DOOM III

## A Holiday in Scarborough (or something)

**I**t's not confirmed yet, but the rumours are running rife at the moment. With *Quake* still months and months away, and *Heretic* proving to be very popular (despite the fact that it's nowhere near as good as *Doom*), it seems extremely likely that we will be seeing a final part in what will become the *Doom* trilogy.

If the rumours are to be believed, then the third installation of *Doom* will be making use of the enhanced graphics engine used in *Heretic* (with looky-uppy-downy-bits) and will finally close the whole caboodle with one enormous and incredibly loud bang. Hoorah. Expect to see the game (if it really is going to happen... and isn't just one of these ridiculous rumours) featuring some new weapons, a host of new monsties and an enhanced networking option to allow up to 16 players as opposed to the four supported at present.

Hopefully we'll be able to keep you up to date with more news in next month's issue.





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## Bulletin



(Left) Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds - More monsters, badder baddies and beautiful "snowy-scape" landscapes a-plenty. Sadly, not a snowman in sight and not a dickie bird from Aled Jones.

## DISPATCHES

## +++ ENHANCED EMPIRE

Empire is releasing a multi-media version of *Empire Soccer*. The package, entitled *World Soccer*, includes a massive database which contains all the info on all the teams in the World Cup's history. In addition to giving you 1,000 colour pics of famous football players in action and over 150 full-motion video clips, *World Soccer* also contains a new improved version of *Empire Soccer*.

Empire is also releasing Award Winners Platinum, a three-game compilation which brings together *Civilization*, *Frontier Elite 2* and *Lemmings* all in the same box. Both titles are due for release this month.

Contact Empire on 081 343 7337.

## +++ UFO RETURNS

*X-COM: UFO Terror from the Deep* is one of the most eagerly awaited mission disks ever. We don't normally condone software houses churning out mission disks and add-ons and charging the punter for what usually turns out to be the rest of the game they originally bought, but considering this is a whole new scenario for the strategy game of last year, and is set in a completely different environment, we'll let MicroProse off the hook with this one. *Terror from the Deep* uses the same control interface as *UFO*, but has a host of new features. The most notable difference is that most of the game, as the title suggests, takes place underwater. Also, the game features twice as many tactical sites as *UFO* and ten times the level of animation. There are new weapons to use, submarines to control and new alien technologies to discover.

*Terror from the Deep* will be released next month so look out for a full review in the next issue, but if you just can't wait to hear more about it, then contact MicroProse on 01454 326532 for more information.



## MAGIC CARPET II

**I**T'S SEQUEL CITY this month! After recently spending some time with the chaps at Bullfrog, we can reveal that there is a sequel to the awesome *Magic Carpet*, and it will be released before the end of the year. Wow! What a surprise, eh? Quite what the sequel will involve is unclear as we go to press, but it would seem sensible to assume that it will include the latest enhancement of the 3D engine which can be found in the forthcoming *Creation*.

In the meantime, though, the team has put together a data disk for the game, going by the name of *Hidden Worlds*. Featuring new graphics, tougher baddies and some awesome "snowy waste" style backdrops, the new tasks look absolutely fabulous. All of the castles have been redesigned, the monsties are now even nastier looking and everything is covered in ice (some nice use of the transparent graphical effect can be found throughout). On top of all this you also get a new spell to collect... the homing meteor.

*Hidden Worlds* is currently scheduled for a March release and will initially be a CD-only product, with the possibility of a floppy version later in the year. You'll need the original game if you want to be able to play *Hidden Worlds*.

Our final *Magic Carpet* news this month (there's lots going on at the mo) is that it will finally be released on floppy. About bloody time, eh? Apparently all the fancy animations have been stripped out so that the entire game can be crammed onto just four floppies.

Expect to see the game in the shops as you read this, priced at £44.99.



## SYSTEM SHOCK II

**B**loody hell... another sequel? What's going on this year? Can no one come up with a new idea? Guess what's next... a sequel to *System Shock*. There's a surprise.

When Looking Glass Technologies was recently taken over by Virgin Interactive Entertainment, there was some debate as to the future of the *System Shock* concept. Who owned the rights? Was it Looking Glass itself, or was it Origin who published the game through Electronic Arts? It now seems that everything has been sorted out and we can look forward to the second part of the series arriving before Christmas.

Quite what the game will involve is unclear (it's another one of *those...* we know it's coming but very little is known about it), but we do know that the technology will be a development of the CD version of *System Shock*. As you'd expect, the product will be available on CD-ROM only, and will feature full speech throughout, as well as the superb SVGA graphics system which wowed everyone in *System Shock* CD.

As far as storyline goes, nothing has been released as yet, but like so many other products, it seems that full details will be released at the E3 show in Los Angeles this May. We'll bring you more news as we get it.

## RISE OF TRIAD AND APOGEE AT US GOLD

**A**fter a few months of comparative dormancy, US Gold is again making noises about new license deals for high-quality PC products. Following the publicity about losing LucasArts and SSI, the company seemed to go into a sort of "sulk", with only three major products making much of an impact over the Christmas period.

Well, the chaps from Brummie are back with a major announcement regarding the highly-respected shareware team, Apogee. Having successfully completed a deal with the firm, US Gold will now be the exclusive distributor of all Apogee's products in the UK, with the first fruits of the deal being the highly-acclaimed (and much sought after) *Rise of the Triad*. To avoid confusion (or actually, aid it if you're not sure about what's being going on over the past few months) the *Triad* deal is not exclusive, and although US Gold will be selling full packaged versions of both the floppy and CD-ROM versions of the game, it is not the only vendor of this product. Due to the fact that the shareware version of the game has been available for several months, the PD and shareware libraries will also be able to offer registered full versions in the usual way. *Rise of the Triad* should be available in the shops (with US Gold branding) by the time you read this.



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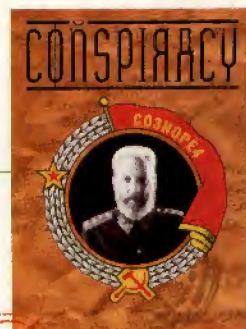


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## THE 7th GUEST

"Utterly stunning" - PC Player



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## CONSPIRACY

"Excellent" - CD Power Play



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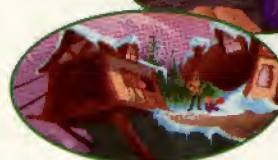


## DUNE

"This game is exceptional" - PC Player

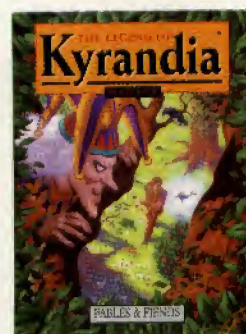


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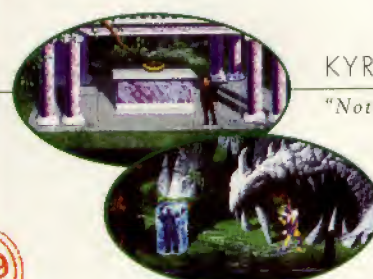


## HAND OF FATE

"Biggest fantasy game ever" - PC Zone

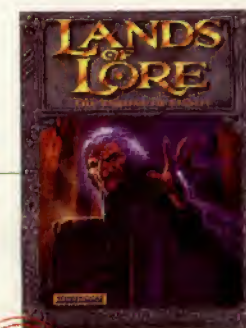


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## KYRANDIA

"Nothing short of stunning" - PC Zone



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## LANDS OF LORE

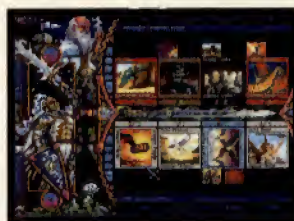
"Delivers the goods" - PC Zone

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## Bulletin

(Right) Play Top Trumps (well, kind of) on your PC, courtesy of MicroProse, and magic away those long winter evenings.



## DISPATCHES

## +++ JOYSWITCH-TASTIC!

If you've got more than two joysticks that you use on a regular basis (i.e. your Thrustmaster T1 Wheel, all your flight sim gear, your gamepad and your favourite digital joystick), you will probably be well aware of the hassle involved in swapping them over when you want to play different games. Repeated plugging in and pulling out can also cause rapid wear and tear on all ports and plugs, and with this in mind Lead Pursuit have come up with a "Joyswitch" that plugs into the back of your gameport and allows you to plug up to six (four joysticks and two foot-control systems) in at once, and at the flick of a switch, choose the ones you want to use, saving any undue wear and tear on your system.

It comes highly recommended by all the major joystick manufacturers (Thrustmaster, Gravis, CH, Suncom and Quickshot) and retails at £49.95.

Contact Paperlogic for further details on 0171 636 7099.

## +++ CLOCKWERX

Tetris. What a classic. That chap Alexei Myarsdoesitch really does know what gameplay is all about.

His latest creation is a new puzzle game called *Clockwerx*, which has you manoeuvring a spinning clock hand across various different levels (over 100 in all - gasp!) avoiding various dangers, such as enemy clock hands, oil globs and spikes. If it sounds odd, then that's 'cos it is, but you try to describe a game from the same designer as Tetris. Take our word for it, it may look and sound simple, but it is in fact very complicated once you start playing it. Spectrum reckons it's a lot of fun anyway - sadly Alexei was unavailable for comment, but I'm sure he'll agree, as he's lending his name to it. There's even a two-player option so that players can play co-operatively. What will Alexei think of next?

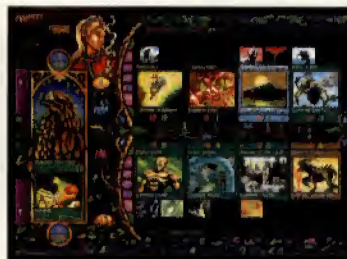
*Clockwerx* is due for release in the spring and will probably retail for around £25.

Contact MicroProse on: 01454 326532.

MICROPROSE  
MAGIC TRUMPS

WELL, IT'S BIG OVER THERE (in the US, that is) and it's starting to catch on over here. Playing *Magic: The Gathering*, that is. What is it? A sort of cross between *Top Trumps* and *Dungeons & Dragons*. Players make their own personalised deck of 60 or so cards consisting of land (mana), spells, magical items, orcs, elves and a whole host of unthinkable nasties. Each player (or wizard) has 20 life points (hit points) and takes it in turn to kick merry bells out of each other using their deck.

Since August last year, millions of cards have been sold (there are currently 1,000 different cards in circulation and the manufacturers are producing more every few months) and it's supposedly one of the biggest licenses ever. Did you say license? Yep, MicroProse is currently working on a PC version of the game that will make playing it and learning it a whole lot easier (it's quite complicated until you get a grasp of the basics), and players will be able to play against their machine or up to seven other opponents and do battle over a modem. There's even talk of a WAN, where players will be able to team up and turn each other into hi-res toads, but you'll have to wait a while until anything on such a large scale happens over here. More on *Magic* next month.

Machiavelli  
the PrinceMACHIAVELLI  
THE PRINCE

MAKE money through trading exotic goods over land and sea, manipulate political and religious institutions using a variety of devious means, explore the world, rule the high seas and get paid vast amounts of money to ask questions in parliament. No, it's not a training sim for Young Tories (not quite) but a world-trading game set in the 14th century not unlike *Colonization*.

Players must forge political and economic links with up to 40 cities, make a huge profit and gain as much power as possible using bribery, corruption and assassins to achieve their ends. You can play against the computer or up to three other players via a modem and it's all done in nice hi-res graphics. Not exactly ground-breaking, but a pleasant introduction into the world of sims.

Contact MicroProse on 01454 326532.

## STAR WARS ADVENTURE GAME

AFTER what must now be years of speculation it has now finally been confirmed that LucasArts is working on a SCUMM-based point-and-click adventure set in the *Star Wars* universe.

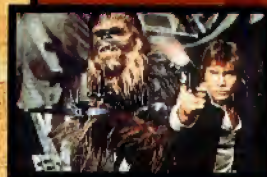
Ever since *Monkey Island* was released way back in the depths of history, people (mainly over-enthusiastic journalists, to tell you the truth) have been pondering over the likelihood of such a game. Well, we can now confirm that YES... it is happening, and the first screen shots of the product will be on show this summer, with the distinct possibility of a release date before the end of the year.

No storyline is confirmed, but it seems likely that LucasArts will continue with its policy of using the *Star Wars* concept as a basis and simply using the characters and locations created for the films and books. Chances are, we can expect something similar to *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* where familiar characters are used in a totally new interactive story.

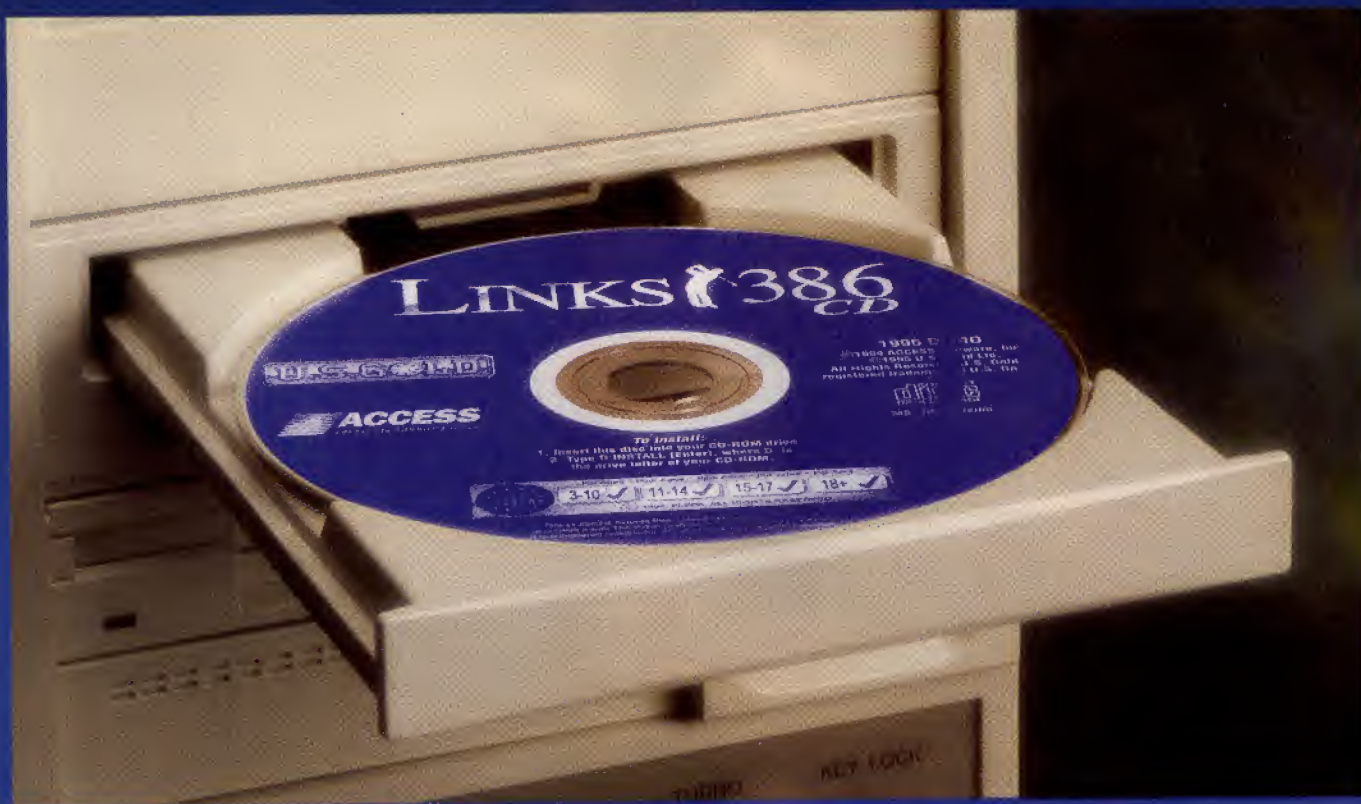
Oh, and by the way, LucasArts has also announced that a fifth *Indiana Jones* game will be released during either late 1995 or 1996. Plans for a third *Maniac Mansion* game, however, have been shelved.



(Left and below) The one we've all been waiting for. LucasArts reckon that it'll have something out by the end of the year. Yeah, right! And R2D2 can climb stairs and plays badminton to keep fit!







## ' THE PERFECT DRIVE '

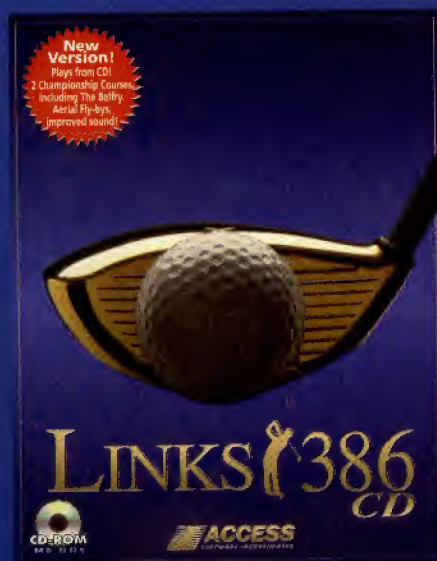


The perfect golf simulation deserves the perfect PC platform. Now the most award winning golf game in software history has been enhanced for CD.

### *The Belfry ~ Harbour Town*

The new Links 386 CD features Harbour Town Golf Links as well as The Ryder Cup venue, The Belfry.

Links 386 CD includes an entirely new digital sound system and



simulated aerial fly-bys of each hole, allowing you to assess the challenge from the air. All other Links Championship Courses are playable with Links 386 CD, creating a complete golfing experience.



The Perfect Golf Simulation, The Perfect Drive...



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PERFECTION  
PERFECTED



Minimum Requirements: 386sx IBM PC, 4MB RAM, 16MB Hard drive space, Double speed CD-ROM drive, MS-DOS 3.1, SVGA monitor, Mouse, Sound Card recommended. Screenshots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which may vary considerably between different formats in quality and are subject to the computer's specifications. ©1992-95 Access Software, Inc. All rights reserved. Published by U.S. Gold Ltd, Units 2-3 Hollard Way, Hollard, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel 0121 625 3366. U.S. Gold is a registered trademark of U.S. Gold Ltd. The image of Big Bertha on the front of the packaging is used with permission of Callaway Golf. Big Bertha is a registered trademark of Callaway Golf.





**Flight Unlimited™ is the most realistic flight simulator ever developed for the PC. Featuring innovative 3D texture mapped scenery and a unique physics model, Flight Unlimited™ gives you the opportunity to take control of some of the hottest, fastest planes ever built. You have the chance to master the Sukhoi SU - 31, Pitts Special S - 2A, Extra 300S, Bellanca Decathlon or the Grob S103, through 25 comprehensive flight lessons developed by a certified aerobatics instructor.**

**With three specialised cockpits and five exterior cameras you will have total control over your view and perspective as you test your new found flying expertise on the challenging aerial obstacle courses. All this coupled with a totally 'live' gameworld enabling you to fly and land where you please, ensures that Flight Unlimited™ is the definitive flight simulation.**



**A LookingGlass Technologies Production**



**Distributed by  
Virgin Interactive Entertainment Ltd**



# FLIGHT

## UNLIMITED<sup>TM</sup>



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# Bulletin

## EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

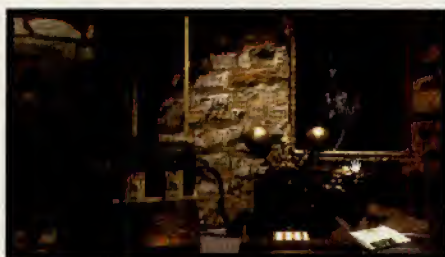
**E**mpire has a seriously heavy-duty American Civil War strategy simulation in development, which looks like a serious challenge to Impressions' long-running line of PC war games. *Civil War* allegedly accurately recreates the problems of the commanders during the war and sports a 3D-action battlefield which allows you to directly control your troops in the heat of battle. In campaign mode you control all the resources and movements of armies over a detailed map of Eastern USA. The game is being developed by Dagger Interactive, the team who did *Fields of Glory* for MicroProse, and offers one-or-two-player games over a serial link or network. Extensive tutorial battles are on line to give you a chance to get used to the interface and game system. *Civil War* will hopefully be released some time this month. For more info contact Empire Software on 0181 343 7337.



## FRANKIE GETS INTERACTIVE

**I**NTERPLAY IS ABOUT to release *Frankenstein: Through the Eyes of the Monster*, an adventure game which promises to be incredibly slick, movie-like and user-friendly, while at the same time scaring the living daylights out of everyone who plays it. It also boasts Tim Curry in the lead role as Dr Frankenstein. However, although it has impressive video sequences and a famous actor in it, Interplay would like to point out to the world that this game is not an "interactive movie". It is instead (wait for it) a: "cinematic adventure", which, of course, is an entirely different thing. At the start of the game, you wake up to find yourself inside the body of Dr Frankenstein's spooky monster. You must call upon the brainless monster's superb puzzle-solving skills and adventure game mastery (*Are you sure about that? Ed.*) and help Frank find out how he came to be in this predicament.

The game has some excellent "cinematic adventure" style live video sequences, many of them featuring our Tim as the patronising Doc making fun of his creation (i.e. you). The style of the game is very similar to *Myst*, in as much as it's a photo-realistic flick-screen adventure, but most may prefer the subject matter and humour of *Frankenstein* to *Myst*'s sometimes over-serious approach to gameplay. It's certainly more than a match for *Myst* in the graphics department (check out the stupendously impressive screen shots). *Frankenstein* has an all-new story based on the original classic and will be out on CD-ROM only in May. Contact Interplay on 01235 821666.



## GHOSTLY GOINGS ON

**M**aelstrom, the developers behind the all-time strategy classic *Midwinter*, are turning their hands to something not entirely different. *Red Ghost* is a strategy game, which Maelstrom say betters anything they've done to date.

In the game you take control of a special forces unit whose task is to attack and destroy a military force known as Red Ghost. The game uses a new technique called Rayscapes, which creates a 3D-environment to depict the different landscapes within the game. Players will travel from the mountains of Chile to the islands of the Caribbean as they attempt to destroy the mysterious Red Ghost military units. During the course of the game you will take control of several different types of vehicles, including boats, tanks and helicopters. Hmm, mountains of Chile scenarios and multiple-vehicle choices, eh? It all sounds a bit modern-day *Midwinter*-esque to us. Well, about time too, if it is. After two unsuccessful attempts to recapture the haunting atmosphere of the original *Midwinter* game (*Midwinter 2*, *Ashes of Empire*), Maelstrom may be finally delivering the goods with *Red Ghost*. The game is due for release in May.

Contact Empire on 0181 343 7337 for more details.





O P E R A T I O N <sup>TM</sup>

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Id Software,  
creators of  
**Wolfenstein<sup>TM</sup>**  
3D.

# BODY COUNT

Mass chaos erupts when militant terrorists take over the United Nations Towers. You are a member of the nation's Elite Force. Waste away all enemies, from scum-sucking sewer rats to steroid-pumped assassins, on your never-say-die mission to save the hostages.

**Modem &  
Network  
Play**



- Modem and Network Play.
- Computer-Controlled Allies – Switch between them or give out simple commands.
- Textured Floors and Ceilings.
- 40 Floors of Intense Battles.
- Multiple Weapons with Simultaneous Use – Fire away with the flame-thrower or waste a wall with the rocket gun.
- Enemies with Ambushing Tactics.
- Cinematic Introduction and Cut Scenes.

**AVAILABLE ON  
IBM PC AND  
PC CD-ROM**

REQUIRES: IBM 386 PC or compatible, 586 recommended; 4 MB RAM, 1 MB hard drive, MS-DOS 5.0, CD-ROM driver (double speed recommended) and software, GRAPHICS: VGA, INPUT: Keyboard, mouse, joystick. SOUND: Sound Blaster family, AdLib, PC Speaker.

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# More than

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With thousands of different products all under one roof, you can do all your shopping around in a single visit! It's a unique chance to buy big name brands direct. Try out the latest PC products before you buy! Make sure that what you are buying is right for you and get all your questions answered.

At the National Computer Shopper Show you will be able to buy:

**Computer Systems:** desktop PCs, handheld computers, laptops, notebooks, palmtops, wordprocessors, multimedia, Pentium PCs.

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**Peripherals:** bubblejet printers, disk drives, dot matrix printers, faxes, inkjet printers, laser printers, modems, monitors, plotters, scanners, CD Rom drives, fax-modems, thermal printers.

**Accessories:** books, cables, components, disk storage, floppy disks, ink refills, memory, processors boards, mice, mousemats, ribbons and stationery.

## **ADVICE!**

**A better place to buy**  
The National Computer Shopper Show gives you all the advice and help you need to make the right buying decisions.

Get free and independent advice from the Computer Shopper Advice Centre and Advice Theatre - and try out all the hottest PC and multimedia games in the Leisure Zone!

## **Spend! Spend! Spend! & Save! Save! Save!**

A visit to the National Computer Shopper Show is also a unique opportunity to buy big names at small prices. The savings start here!

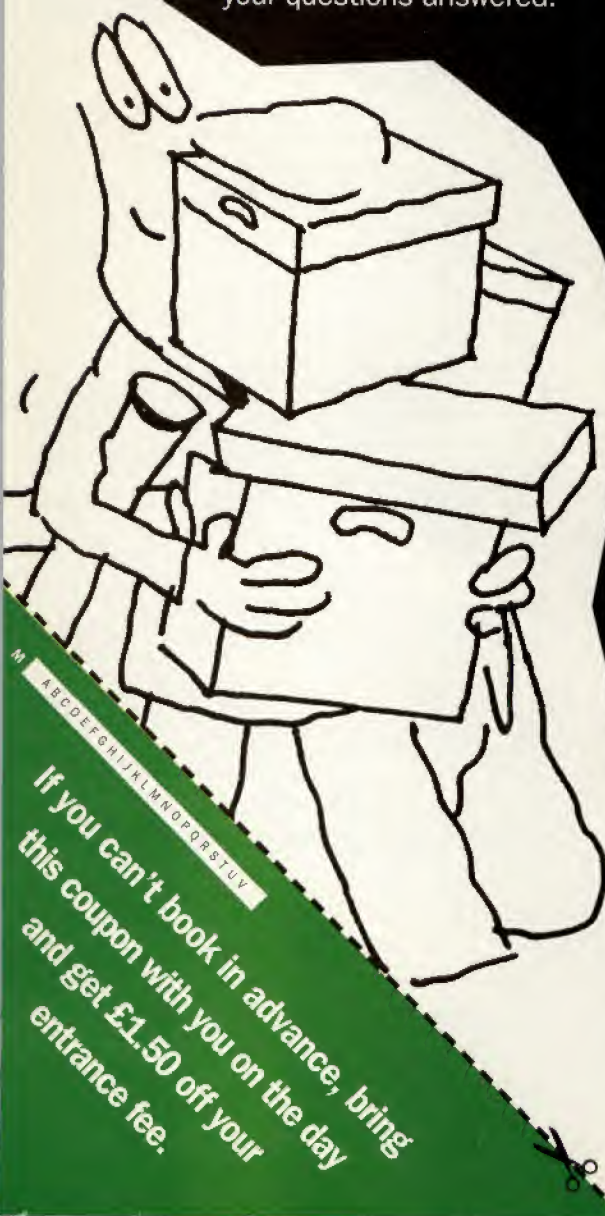
Check out what's happening at the show! Who's exhibiting, updates on feature areas, prizes, launches & live broadcasts.

## **INFORMATION HOTLINE**

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- ask for the Computer  
Shopper hotline





# NATIONAL COMPUTER SHOPPER

NEC BIRMINGHAM 16-19 MARCH 1995

**Save up to 38% off ticket prices - Save £3.00 off adult tickets & a massive £6.00 off family tickets. So don't wait around, book in advance!! Call the hotline today on**

Advanced bookings must be made by 15 March. Any tickets booked after 10 March will be held for collection at the NEC. If you have any queries call NEC Customer Services on 0121 780 4141 ext. 2930.

**By road:** The NEC is off Junction 6 on the M42 which can be reached via the M40 and M6.

By rail: Birmingham International station is right at the heart of the NEC. InterCity provides a half hourly service from London Euston - hourly evenings and Sundays. Direct trains are available from many regional centres. For fares and timetable information please contact your local station or telephone enquiry bureau.

Thursday 16 - Sunday 19 March 1995, 9.30am - 5.00pm

TICKET PRICES	Full Price	Advance Price	YOU SAVE!
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OAP	<del>£5.50</del>	£3.50	£2.00
Family of 4	<del>£22.00</del>	£16.00	£6.00

M ABCDEFGHI





## Bulletin

# The National Computer Shopper Show



**S**PRING IS IN THE AIR, snow drops are creeping up through the frost encrusted earth, mummy and daddy bunny are thinking of starting another family and retailers all over the land are preparing for the bargain-fest of the decade – the National Computer Shopper Show.

Just in case you haven't been to a Shopper Show before, we've listed a few pointers to help you get the most from this barg-tastic spring spectacular. Just follow the seven easy steps and you'll be in bargain heaven.

## Seven Steps to Shopper Heaven

- 1 Cancel everything between Thursday 16 and Sunday 19 March 1995. 9.30am to 5.00pm
- 2 Call the ticket hotline on 0121 767 4343 to order your tickets in advance and save up to 38 per cent off the full price.
- 3 Empty your bank account of all your savings, look down the back of the sofa for any spare change and advertise your Grandma in the local press, stating "genuine reason for sale".
- 4 Brag to all your friends about all the savings you're going to make and tell them that they're silly nonnies if they don't join you.
- 5 Get incredibly excited about being able to play all the latest games in the *Letsure Zone* and spend every second of your free time practising so that you can enter all the free multi-player network competitions and have a chance of winning loads of lovely prizes.
- 6 Check out what's happening at the show, who's exhibiting (and what), updates on feature areas, prizes, launches and live broadcasts by calling the information hotline on 0181 742 2828.
- 7 Stick your dosh-laden wallet in your back pocket along with your ticket or special "money-off" coupon and go treat yourself to some fab bargains!



## DOOMWATCH™ No.2

*An occasional series in which the FragÜberMeister (David McCandless) roves the country for interesting, perplexing or damnright eclectic ways of playing Doom (and killing people).*

**L**ast month it was GamesNet in Cardiff, a dedicated *Doom*-playing BBS, which allowed you to log on and play four-player network games with a standard 14.4 modem. Unfortunately, the FragÜberMeister, got the numbers wrong. For the record:

GAMESNET BBS (Cardiff)  
Modem: 01222-362361 (8,E,1)  
Voice: 01222-798767

This month, we explore The Forest BBS, a dedicated *Doom*-playing BBS, which lets you log on and play four-player network games with a standard 14.4 modem.

Using the same software as GamesNet (SIRDOOM.ZIP, down-loadable on first contact), The Forest combines all the usual BBS-edibles: file libraries, e-mail etc., as well as a game area, supporting *Doom I*, *Doom II*, and *Heretic*. Payment is credit based. Your new account starts with 4000 credits, but file downloads, e-mail, and gaming will quickly chomp it away. Restock by buying more credits (about £1 per 3000 credits) or by uploading files.

The *Doom* skill levels of the regulars is varied, and the best players frequent both GamesNet and The Forest. Keep your mouse balls peeled for BloodBiter, Overkill, Escher, Hunter, and Mr.X. Oh, and some guy called Macca. Practice levels 1, 7, 16 and 32 of *Doom II* – these are the most popular spots for Deathmatch-a-thons.

A 9600 modem is fine for two-player games, but you'll definitely need a 14400 beast preferably connected to a DX266 or better for three- or four-player games. Turn ON your hardware flow control, but whip OFF your Data Compression and Error Control before you connect to play.

*Have fun, Doom disciples.*

THE FOREST BBS (Hampshire)  
Modem: 01425 629629 (8,E,1)





**SOUNDWAVE 32 PRO**  
INCLUDES  
**NASCAR**  
FOR A LIMITED PERIOD ONLY

# DISCOVER THE SOUND SENSATION

Monday 23 January 1995

"Entertainment, MIDI and Business Audio, with beautiful, crystal-clear sounds? It must be the new SoundWave 32 Pro from Orchid" cried Henry. "Using Orchid's latest PRO ROMs, which combine wavetable and algorithmic synthesis, natural sounds like pianos and horns sound incredibly real, while sound effects keep their depth and vibrance."

Friday 27 January 1995

"Did you know you can now have sampling capabilities with a GameWave sound card?" I asked the Doctor. "That's right" he replied, "and now, you can not only record with Orchid's GameWave 32 Plus, but you also get the sensational sounds provided with their latest PRO ROMs."

Sunday 29 January 1995

It seems too good to be true - all the astounding features of a SoundWave 32+ SCSI bundled with the amazing Toshiba XM5201B triple-speed CD-ROM Drive. But then you realise that all this is included in Orchid's SoundWave SCSI Kit, as well as MIDIsoft's MIDI sequencer and MIDI cable. Such a diversity of features must surely be a gift from the Gods.



## SOUNDWAVE 32 PRO

- Compatible with leading audio standards
- Latest PRO ROMs
- 20Mhz DSP technology
- Bundled Software
- SCSI option available

## GAMEWAVE 32 PLUS

- Compatible with leading audio standards
- Latest PRO ROMs
- 20Mhz DSP technology

## SOUNDWAVE SCSI KIT

- SoundWave 32+ SCSI
- Toshiba XM5201B Triple-speed CD-ROM Drive
- MIDIsoft Recording Session
- MIDI cable



# Bulletin

## GALLUP CHARTS

So many games, so little time – these days, shopping for your PC can be a nightmare. But now, with the help of Gallup's handy household charts, you can check out what you should be playing. There's something for everyone here: full-price PC titles, budget games and even a selection of CD-ROM titles.

### Top 20 Full Price Titles

1. Sim City 2000	Maxis/Mindscape
2. Winter Olympics	US Gold
3. Premier Manager 3	Gremlin Interactive
4. TIE Fighter: Defender of Empire	LucasArts
5. Mortal Kombat	Virgin
6. Doom 2	Virgin
7. Transport Tycoon	MicroProse
8. NASCAR	Virgin
9. Star Trek: 25th Anniversary	Interplay
10. The Lion King	Virgin
11. Civilization	MicroProse
12. TIE Fighter	LucasArts
13. Microsoft Flight Sim V.5	Microsoft
14. Soccer Kid	Krisalis
15. X-Wing	Virgin
16. TFX	Ocean
17. Theme Park	Bullfrog
18. FIFA International Soccer	Electronic Arts
19. Colonization	MicroProse
20. Championship Manager 3	Domark

### Top 10 PC Budget Titles

1. Theatre of Death	Psygnosis
2. Armour-Geddon	Psygnosis
3. Hired Guns	Psygnosis
4. HEXX – Heresy of the Wizard	Psygnosis
5. Dune 2	Hit Squad
6. Bram Stoker's Dracula	Psygnosis
7. Champion Manager 94: End of Season	Damark
8. Easy to Learn Computing	Premier Collection
9. Monkey Island 2	Kixx
10. Formula 1 Grand Prix	Powerplus

### Top 10 CD-ROM Titles

1. Innocent Until Caught	Psygnosis
2. Microcosm	Psygnosis
3. Wing Commander 3	Electronic Arts
4. Doom 2	Virgin
5. Magic Carpet	Bullfrog
6. Little Big Adventure	Electronic Arts
7. Privateer/Strike Commander	Electronic Arts
8. Creature Shock	Virgin
9. Theme Park	Bullfrog
10. NASCAR	Virgin



## WHO WOULD BE PRESIDENT?

**T**ake a mundane, every day, yawnsome Presidential simulation, then tart it up with lovely graphics, stick lots of multi-media bells and whistles on it and what have you got? Well, Empire has done it and come up with *CyberJudas*, the sequel to the award-winning *Shadow President* political power game.

The game is set in cyberspace, where you control the most powerful nation on earth. You have lots of money, great big weapons and a large dollop of political influence to help you on your way. There are three different modes of play in this immensely exciting game. In the main *CyberJudas* game you have to run the world while at the same time trying to see off a traitor in your presidential advisory team. In the *Advisor Political* game you run the world while the cabinet vies for political power. The third mode of play is the *World Simulator*, which Empire isn't saying much about, but we do know it's a political simulator. Well, it all sounds smashing and thrilling to us and we just can't wait to get our hands on *CyberJudas* when it comes out this month.

For more details contact Empire on 0181 343 7337.

## SALES CURVE IN SEX SHOCKER

**S**CI have a "hate your fellow man" sim in development, which pits men against women in a battle to take over the world. *Gender Wars* takes place in the distant future where relations between men and women have hit an all-time low. Slowly but surely each gender becomes more resentful of the other and inevitably the two genders split up. You take the role of your preferred gender and thrash the hell out of the other one in this isometric view, strategy adventure game. *Gender Wars* will be released at the end of the year.

Also in development for SCI is *Hard Corps*: a 3D multi-player action adventure. It's a strategic shoot 'em up in which one to four players link up over a network or modem and blast the hell out of each other in futuristic arenas. There are over 20 arenas and 90 computer opponents to take on in the game, which will be out in the last quarter of this year.

On a slightly lighter tone, SCI is also working on *Kingdom O' Magic*, a point-and-click comedy adventure using RPG-type characters. The game takes a light-hearted look at role-playing games and a humorous approach to the normally serious nature of Tolkien-esque fantasy games. You have a choice of pursuing any of three quests from different perspectives, so hopefully this will make for refreshingly non-linear gameplay.

SCI is also working on the official sequel to the *Lawnmower Man* game. *Lawnmower Man 2: Jobe's War* will be an arcade game with multi-player network support. This is a far cry from the original game which was a one-player, puzzle-solving affair. For more details on these games call SCI on 0171 585 3308.



(Top) *Gender Wars* – Chained to the kitchen sink, endless shopping trips and coffee mornings – a woman's work is never done.

(Above) *Kingdom O' Magic* – So funny you'll eat your anorak!



# On Land and Sea...



VOYAGES

## of DISCOVERY

In *Voyages of Discovery*, enjoy a complex trade simulation and strategy game. You are taken back to the days of discovering new continents, establishing colonies and trading relationships. Ships transporting goods and settlers around the globe. Missions, plantations and pirates on the high seas. Travel through fantasy worlds, randomly generated, and enjoy being an explorer in an unknown world full of promise and opportunity.

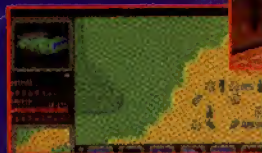


# ...In Air and Space

## Inordinate DESIRE

Experience the ultimate in strategic warfare of the future. Plan the invasion of enemy held planets from your space craft carrier, take out enemy patrols in space and destroy their ground units and bases.

A military fantasy, far too close for comfort. Can you conquer worlds and restore peace to the galaxy? The complex ground strategy is a challenge to even the most avid computer general; plan the battles, deploy your units and keep your forces in steady supply.



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Tel: 0438 840003



# COVER DISK

Peaches and Cream, Gin and Tonic, Peters and Lee, *PC Zone* and *Doom* – they just seem to really belong to one another, don't they?

To celebrate this match made in heaven, we've put together a fabulous CD-ROM, full of *Doom* clones as well as over a 1000 new levels for *Doom/ Doom2/Heretic* and a level editor for *Heretic*.



## NO CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out the following slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to the following address:

**Miles Tudor, CD Exchange, PC Zone,  
Dennis Publishing,  
19 Bolsover St, London. W1P 7HJ**

Your Details:

Name: .....

Address: .....

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Post Code: .....

Please make checks payable to:

**DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd.**

CDs from previous issues are also available.

Phone Miles (NEVER before 11.00am) on:

0171 917 7693

and he'll do his very best to sort you out.

## HD Installation

To install this month's HD, make the drive containing the disk current by typing **A:** then type **PC ZONE**. Then simply follow the instructions below.

### X-COM: Terror From The Deep

(Also on CD)

*UFO: Enemy Unknown* is widely regarded as the best action-strategy game ever.

The sequel *Terror from the Deep* (TFTD) retains all the playability and intensity of the original and features twice as many sites and ten times the level of animation, as well as some spooky underwater effects. There are also loads of new ALFs to batter, special underwater weaponry and new multi-level tactical maps to get to grips with.

This exclusive playable demo is a special self-contained mission written exclusively for *PC Zone* just to give you a little taster of what it's all about.

For further details get in touch with MicroProse on: 0454 326532.

### Controls

Use your mouse to move your squad around the underwater environment. The tool bar (see below) initiates various moves and actions.

### System Requirements

386DX (486 recommended) 4MB RAM with 590K Base Memory. Supports all SoundBlaster and all compatible sound cards.



- |  |                         |                                 |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Show's you what is in your left hand | 8 Centre map on soldier | 15 Normal movement              |
| 2 Hold your weapon in your right hand  | 9 Move to next squaddy  | 16 Time reserved for snap shot  |
| 3 Vertical movement                    | 10 Deselect squaddy     | 17 Time reserved for aimed shot |
| 4 Change viewing                       | 11 Add/Remove ceilings  | 18 Time reserved for auto shot  |
| 5 Map etc.                             | 12 Game options         | 19 Soldiers' stats              |
| 6 Stand/Crouch                         | 13 End turn             |                                 |
| 7 View soldier                         | 14 End mission          |                                 |



This CD was prepared on a Plasmon CD recorder. For more information contact Relection Systems Ltd on: 01763 262963.



Plasmon

# CD-ROM Installation

To install this month's CD, make the drive containing the disk current by typing, for example, D:, then type PCZONE. A menu will then pop up with a list of this month's demos – simply use the cursor keys to highlight the game you wish to play, hit the RETURN key and off you go.

## 1,000 Doom/Heretic/Doom2 Levels

Yep, just when you thought there weren't any more out there, we bring over 1,000 new levels for your favourite 3D shoot 'em up. To find out how to access them, look at the README.TXT file and follow the instructions. And the last one to finish every level is a big wuss!

## Dark Forces (LucasArts)

We brought you the exclusive review last month, and now you can play it yourself in this fully-playable demo. All the weapons are in their somewhere (there are lots of hidden bits throughout the game) and the object of your mission is to steal the Death Star plans. What could be simpler?

For further details contact Virgin on: 0181 960 2255.

## Controls

Well, they're the same as *Doom*, aren't they! You can also look up and down using PGE UP and PGE DWN.

## Descent (Interplay)

The *Doom*-clone that everyone is talking about, *Descent* is a cross between *Alien Breed*



and everyone's favourite 3D shoot-em up. Except that it's slicker, smoother and a lot more intense.

Guide your speedy ship through the maze of tunnels, shooting anything and everything that moves, activate the primer and get out as quickly as possible. There are seven complete missions to work your way through and it just gets tougher.

## Controls

**CURSOR KEYS** – Direction

**A/Z** – Forward/Reverse

**CONTROL** – Fire laser

**SPACE** – Fire rockets

**ALT** – Strafe

**Q/E** – Pitch Left/Right

**F1** – Options

Also joystick compatible.

## Inferno (Ocean)

Explore the unknown universe in this space combat sim spectacular.

Navigate deep space, skim over planets, enter enemy bases and even dip beneath the waves for some underwater combat. Go anywhere in fact, but make sure you know how to get home. For further details contact Ocean on: 0161 832 6633.



## HELP!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PCs just being a total bast? Then just relax, chill out, have a cold shower and then phone the relevant help line:

## HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990

Any week day between 9am and 4pm.

## CD-ROM HELP

Phone Miles Tudor on 0171 917 7693

Any week day between 11am and 6pm. (DO NOT phone earlier as your calls will NOT be answered.)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down as much relevant information as possible i.e. System type, sound card, RAM etc., plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

## Controls

**ARROW KEYS** – Direction

**+/- KEYS** (Numeric keypad only) –

Increase/decrease power

**SPACE** – Fire weapons

Alternatively use your mouse or joystick to control your ship.

For a complete list of controls access the README.TXT file before running the game.

## Iron Assault (Virgin)

Guide your metal mutha warrior into battle onto the city streets, into buildings and down secret back passages as you guide your ground-shaking killing machine on yet another seek-and-destroy mission. Heavy-metal shoot 'em up action at its best.

For further details contact Virgin on: 0181 960 2255.

## Controls

**NUMERIC KEYPAD** –

Direction/Accelerate/Decelerate

**-/+/\*** – Crosshair Up/Down/Centre

**SPACE** – Fire Weapon

**ENTER** – Lock Target

**BACKSPACE** – Change Weapon

Alternatively you can use your mouse to control your HUD.

Access the README.TXT file before running the game.

## MACHINE SPECIFICATION

Most of the games on the CD-ROM will run comfortably on a 486SX with 4Mb RAM with a double-speed CD-ROM drive and are Sound-Blaster compatible. If in doubt, consult the README.TXT file in the game directory.

Some of the more graphically demanding games may require a faster processor and 8Mb RAM to run satisfactorily, though you may be able to get them to work on a slower machine by adjusting the detail levels.

Please be aware that different games require different memory setups. For details on how to configure your machine correctly consult the **HELP!** section or ring the reader helpline (see above right).



# COVER DISK

## MetalTech: Battledrome (Sierra)

Another HERC stomping shoot 'em up, but this time you're doing it for fun.

Guide your HERC around the arena and blast your opponents to smithereens with a selection of weapons. This is just a taster of the fabulous multi-player action from the people who brought you the smash hit *Earthsiege*.

For further details contact Sierra on: 01734 303322.

### Controls

**ARROW KEYS** – Direction

**SPACE** – Fire Weapon

**I/M/J/K** – Turret Control

**BACKSPACE** – Centre Turret

**+/-** – Increase/Decrease Throttle

Alternatively use your joystick to control your HERC. For a complete list of key controls access the *README.TXT* file before running the game.

## Body Count (US Gold)

Run around an office block, killing everything that moves. Not the best *Doom*-clone to surface recently, but a lot of fun anyway.

For further information contact US Gold on: 0121 606 1800.

### Controls

Well, they're the same as *Doom* (again).

## Mortal Kombat 2 (Acclaim)

More mindless killing, maiming, death and violence, but this time you use your fists (and legs and head and knees and elbows



etc..) instead of a shotgun. The best beat 'em up ever on the PC, proving you don't need a console to indulge in some innocent fisty-cuffs. For further information contact Acclaim on 0171 344 5000.

### Controls

You can configure the keys when the game begins via the Option Menu. It is playable with a keyboard, although we strongly recommend that you use a four-key joystick as some of the specialist moves are inaccessible due to the PC keyboard's auto-repeat set up.

## Jungle Strike (Gremlin Interactive)

The old console classic finally makes it onto the PC with some well-done enhancements to bring it bang up to date.

Fly your chopper on a mission of death and destruction, rescuing POWs as you swirl about the tree tops. A tireless classic that exudes gameplay from every orifice.

For further details contact Gremlin on: 01742 753 423.

### Controls

**ARROW KEYS** – Direction

**Z/X/C** – Fire Rockets/Machine Gun

You can also use your joystick or gamepad.

## Premier Manager 3

(Gremlin Interactive)

One of the best football management sims available on the PC gets an overhaul. New features include an Assistant Manager to help out with the accounts and full multimedia enhancements that add sparkle to an already glistening footie sim.

For further information contact Gremlin on: 01742 753423.

### Controls

Use your mouse to access the various menus and controls.

## Virtua Chess (Titus)

At last an intelligent and good-looking chess game that is everything you'd expect.

## CONTACT NUMBERS

Virgin: 0181 960 2255

E.A: 01753 549442

Titus: 0171 700 2119

US Gold: 0121 625 3366

Microprose: 01454 326532

Ocean: 0161 832 6633

Sierra: 01734 303322

Interplay: 01235 821666

Gremlin: 01742 753423

Acclaim: 0171 344 5000

Graphically superior to anything released yet. For further information contact Titus on: 0171 700 2119.

### Controls

Use your mouse to access the various menus and move your pieces around the virtual board.

## Noctropolis (Electronic Arts)

A rich and dark point-and-click adventure that harks back to the days when superheroes could be relied upon to save the world and be home in time for tea.

Navigate your way through this graphically superb adventure, but don't ladder your tights! For more details contact Electronic Arts on: 01753 672088.

### Controls

Use the mouse to point and click your way through the towering skyscrapers and Gothic cathedrals.

## Wings Of Glory (Electronic Arts)

Reach for the skies in this graphically amazing WWI combat sim from Origin.

Go head to head with the Hun or take part in daring bombing raids and blast the Bosch. Shooting down Sausage Breath has never been this much fun. For more info contact Electronic Arts on 01753 672088.

### Controls

Use your joystick to control your plane and access the *README.TXT* file before running the game for a full listing of the keyboard commands.

## Off The Boards

All the shareware reviewed in our *Off the Boards* section is also included on the CD-ROM. Access *Off the Boards* via the opening menu for a complete listing and instructions on how to play the games. ☒

## ZONE ON LINE

This month we have a whole new angle to Zone. The *PC Zone* conference on Cix.

On this month's CD we've Ameol v1.22 which is the latest version of the official Cix off-line reader for *Windows*. You can use it to send e-mail, join any one of around 4000 conferences or get access to the Usenet groups. WWB access will also be supported pretty soon.

The best part of Cix is the *PC Zone* conference. Here you will find us saddies, the Fragmaster (TM) Macca, the odd software house or two and Popeye. There are gaming tips, news of the latest releases and lots of arguments about Macca being the No.1 *Doom* player in the world.

For more information on Cix you should call 0181 390 8446.



# TROUBLESHOOTING

**I**f you experience a problem, the first thing to do is check out the README.TXT files. This will give you in-depth information on the demo. To do this, type:

Edit readme.txt

If you still have difficulties the following troubleshooting tips may help.

## Amnesia?

The most common problem that you'll hit while running any of the demos is a memory problem. Some programs require EMS others XMS, and your PC's configuration needs to be altered accordingly. To change the system you will need to edit your CONFIG.SYS in DOS. To do this, go to the C drive by typing:

C:  
CD\

Edit Config.sys

You should then look for a line that reads Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe (if its not there then type this in under the first line). You should then add an extra bit that will depend on which set up you require:

### For EMS

The line should read:

Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe RAM

### For XMS

The line should read:

Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe NOEMS

You are advised to keep the EMS setting as a default. If you have DOS 6.0 or higher you can type Memmaker at the DOS prompt and say "yes" to EMS if required or "no" if XMS is needed.

Remember that some games can require up to 590k free base memory.

## Boot Disk

If you are still having problems then the next step is to make a boot disk. If you are using DOS 6.0 or lower then follow the following steps:

Put a floppy in your A: drive and type:

Format A:/S

This will erase all data on the diskette so use one that is no longer needed. When the disk has finished formatting, change to your A: drive. Type the following lines at the A prompt:

Copy con config.sys <Enter>

Dos=High <Enter>

Device=C:\DOS\Himem.sys <Enter>

Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe RAM

<Enter>

(Or Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe NOEMS if XMS is required.)

Then add the lines for the sound card and CD-ROM drive in the same manner. (You can get these lines by looking at the original CONFIG.SYS on the C drive). Once finished press:

F5 <Enter>

You should see the message "1 file(s) copied." If the message does not appear, please follow the instructions again.

## IMPORTANT! ONLY USE THESE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE A DRIVE

Next, type the following lines at the A: prompt:

Copy Con Autoexec.bat <Enter>

Prompt Sp\$g <Enter>

## All sound card and CD-ROM drive lines

You can find these command lines in the AUTOEXEC.BAT on the C drive. They may look similar to this:

Set Blaster=A220 I5 D1 H5 P330 T6

Set Sound=C:\SB16

Please note that these lines may look like this. Check your own AUTOEXEC.BAT beforehand. Once you have completed this, press F6, and again you should see message "1 file(s) copied." If the message does not appear please follow the instructions again.

## IMPORTANT! ONLY USE THESE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE A DRIVE

Once you have done this, with the disk in drive A, press <Ctrl><Alt><Delete> keys together to reboot.

## Clean Boot

If you have DOS 6.2 or higher you should reboot your computer. When you get the message "Starting MS-DOS", hit the F8 key at the top of the keyboard. You will see the message "DOS will prompt you to confirm each CONFIG.SYS command". Say yes to the following lines:

DOS=High

Device=C:\DOS\Himem.sys

Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe RAM (Or NOEMS)

The relevant sound and CD drivers

Say no to the rest of your lines until you are asked to process your AUTOEXEC.BAT. Say yes to this line and the following:

Prompt Sp\$g

Path C:\windows; C:\DOS

Also say yes to all sound card and CD-ROM drivers. Say no to everything else. This should sort things out.

**If you are still having problems, then give Miles a call on 0171 917 7693.**

**(But NEVER before 11.00am.)**

## Important

Some of the programs on the CD are shareware, and as such are supplied as an evaluation service to our readers. If you like the programs and intend to continue using them, you should register them with the publishers concerned. In return you will receive updated versions, extra levels, junk mail and loads of other stuff (probably).

All of these CDs and HDs have been virus checked; HOWEVER, neither PC Zone, Dennis Publishing nor any associated companies can be deemed liable for any problems that may arise from using this disk.

**YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!**

# RISE OF THE TRIAD

## DARK WAR

# IT'S GONNA GET BLOODY!

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IBM PC Min 386-33 MHz 4 MEG RAM, Supports all major soundcards and IPX network supported.



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# Action on the pitch...

## JOINING...

Your appointment as Player Manager brings gasps in the national press. Will you be able to handle the pressure cooker atmosphere of the manager's office and still do your duty for England?

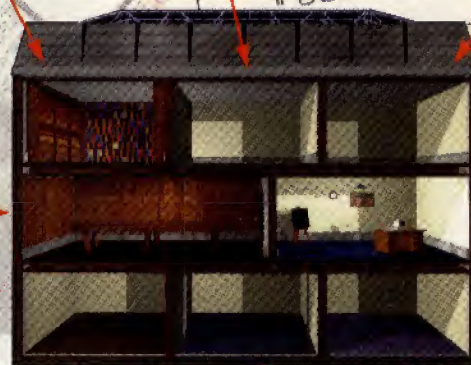
Archives

Finance

Press Office

Board Room

Manager's Office



Physio

Coach

Boot Room



## PLAYING...

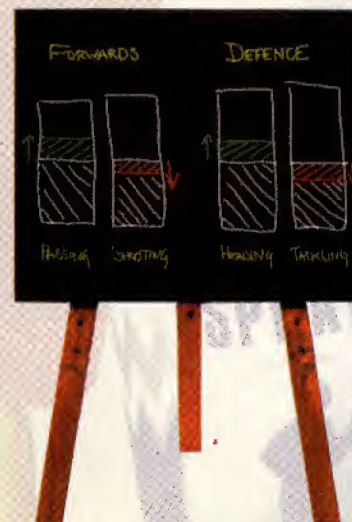
Player Manager 2 is the only management game which gives you the chance to play on the field. As an international star you're already a proven matchwinner who can influence and inspire those around you. Play in your favourite position or control the player nearest the ball, but remember ultimately it is the right managerial decisions that get results.



Nearing 30, the legs won't carry you forever. The road to the top is hard and you will have to give way to younger players eventually and watch them from the dugout. One thing is for sure, you'll never be too far from the action.

## COACHING...

Coaching and training are an integral part of Player Manager 2. Training realistically affects your players' performances. Skills such as shooting, tackling and close control can improve drastically with the right training, but will deteriorate just as quickly with neglect. By varying your training patterns, bringing in specialist coaches, initiating new tactics you can change the way your team play.



**ANCO**

For more detailed information please write to Anco Software Ltd, Unit 7, Millside Industrial Estate, Lawson Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 5BH



## PLANNING...

A good manager is a master tactician. The inclusion of a Ray Trace gives Player Manager 2 the most powerful tactics designer ever. Applying the Ray Trace you can pinpoint player limitations, determine the best positions for your key players, refine systems and design the right tactics for the right matches. Then it's all down to your players.



## SIGNING...

16 year old school boys are much of a muchness. A good manager can spot young talent, train, coach and nurture it to produce international players. The same potential stars in the wrong hands can be wasted, misused and end up as a 4th division nobody. Can you spot the talent amongst the turkeys?

## DEALING...

A shrewd manager knows how to wheel and deal and make a killing in the transfer market. Player Manager 2 has a lively, ever changing transfer market, you can buy domestically or like Ferguson, Dalglish and Keegan before you enter the European transfer market and bolster your squad with foreign talent.



## WINNING IDEAS.

Player Manager 2 is a comprehensive management simulator which tests your management skill where it counts - **ON THE PITCH**

Player Manager 2 is due for release on **AMIGA** in **APRIL** and **PC CD ROM** in **MAY**

# Action off it!

# PLAYER Manager 2



# Blueprint

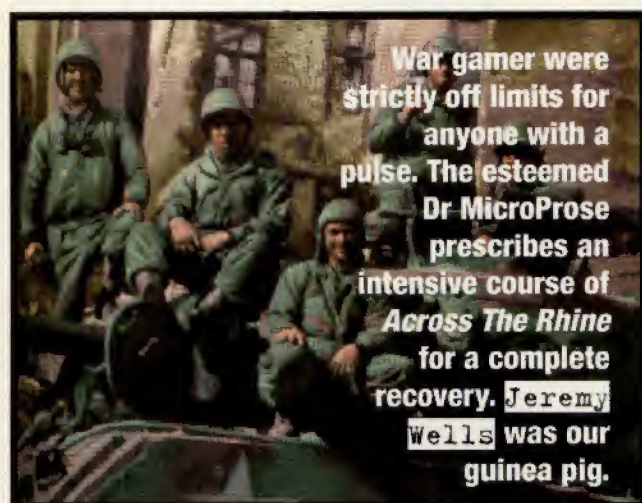
## 1944: Across The Rhine

PUBLISHER: MicroProse

PRICE: TBA

TELEPHONE: 0454 326532

RELEASE DATE: Spring '95



tactics. They do, however, remain remarkably popular amongst a growing hardcore base of war gamers who are continually on the look out for more detail and realism.

Keen to capitalise on this burgeoning, hardcore buying public, and expand upon it into the bargain, the latest war sim from MicroProse attempts to make war gaming on the PC more accessible, more involved and, well, fun to play, whilst keeping the hardcore fans happy. A tall order? Jim Day, *Across the Rhine's* producer, didn't think so?

### Armchair Army

*Across the Rhine (ATR)* is the first game of this type to use a top-down, "God's eye view" as well as a first-person perspective view that transports the player straight into the very heart of the action.

There are six historical campaigns in total to choose from (as well as one other non-historical one), all based on detailed research, facts and figures.

Depending on which side and rank you opt for, you'll find yourself in charge of a force that exactly mirrors the Allied or Nazi forces at a particular time after the D-Day landings, right down to the last billy can. Even the weather is accurate, making it one of the most intense and realistic war simulations ever developed. That's not to say that the playing environment will always be the same every time you enter a campaign. You can "adjust" many of the variables to either strengthen or deplete your force as you see fit, or even switch some of the more tedious options off altogether so that you can concentrate on your campaign proper and not have to worry about whether C Battalion has got enough food and

water. By selecting the special campaign and "tailoring" some logistics, it is even possible for you (yes, you) to change the eventual outcome of the war. But why would you want to do that?

As far as accuracy is concerned, *ATR* can be beaten. All the weapons and military hardware used in the Allied push after the D-Day landings are included, and the game makes excellent use of contemporary photographs and film to set the scene. The programmers felt that this was one of the most interesting periods of the war as far as weapons and tactics were concerned and they were keen to allow as much scope as possible to give the game maximum authenticity and playability. As a result, the game varies greatly, depending on when and where the player decides to start his/her campaign, as do the opposing armies and their resources. For example, if you opt to play the Allies at the beginning of the landings, you'll find yourself in command of a huge force which needs to be carefully organised and configured as you piece together a battle plan. If you choose to opt for the Nazis, however, you'll be in control of a much smaller force which is technically superior, organised and highly mobilised.

### Dad's Army style

Each campaign has an overall objective and can be played separately, although you're expected to take a long-term view when making a battle plan. When played in its entirety the game makes good use of the adage "What I lose today I start without tomorrow", although you can opt to start with renewed forces at the beginning of each campaign to make it easier. Your

**U**P UNTIL NOW, if you have played a war game on the PC it's probably been a top-down hex game that's turn based, makes absolutely no use whatsoever of your machine's graphics and sound capabilities, and comes complete with a manual big enough to be deemed as an offensive weapon i.e. *Panzer General*. Best described as "thorough", these games are strictly off limits to anyone who couldn't tell you the effective range of a Howitzer or explain the impact of the Sten gun on British FIBUA

(Below) You can start your campaign at any point in the war after the D-Day landings and choose which side to fight on and the equipment to fight in.





# .. PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE ULTIMATE AIR COMBAT EXPERIENCE....

FIGHTER WING IS THE LAST WORD  
IN DOGFIGHTING SIMULATION  
COMBINING ALL THE REALISM OF A  
FLIGHT SIMULATOR WITH THE FUN OF  
A SHOOT'EM-UP.

*Features include:*

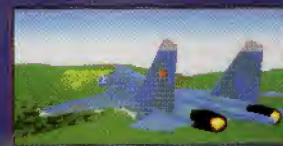
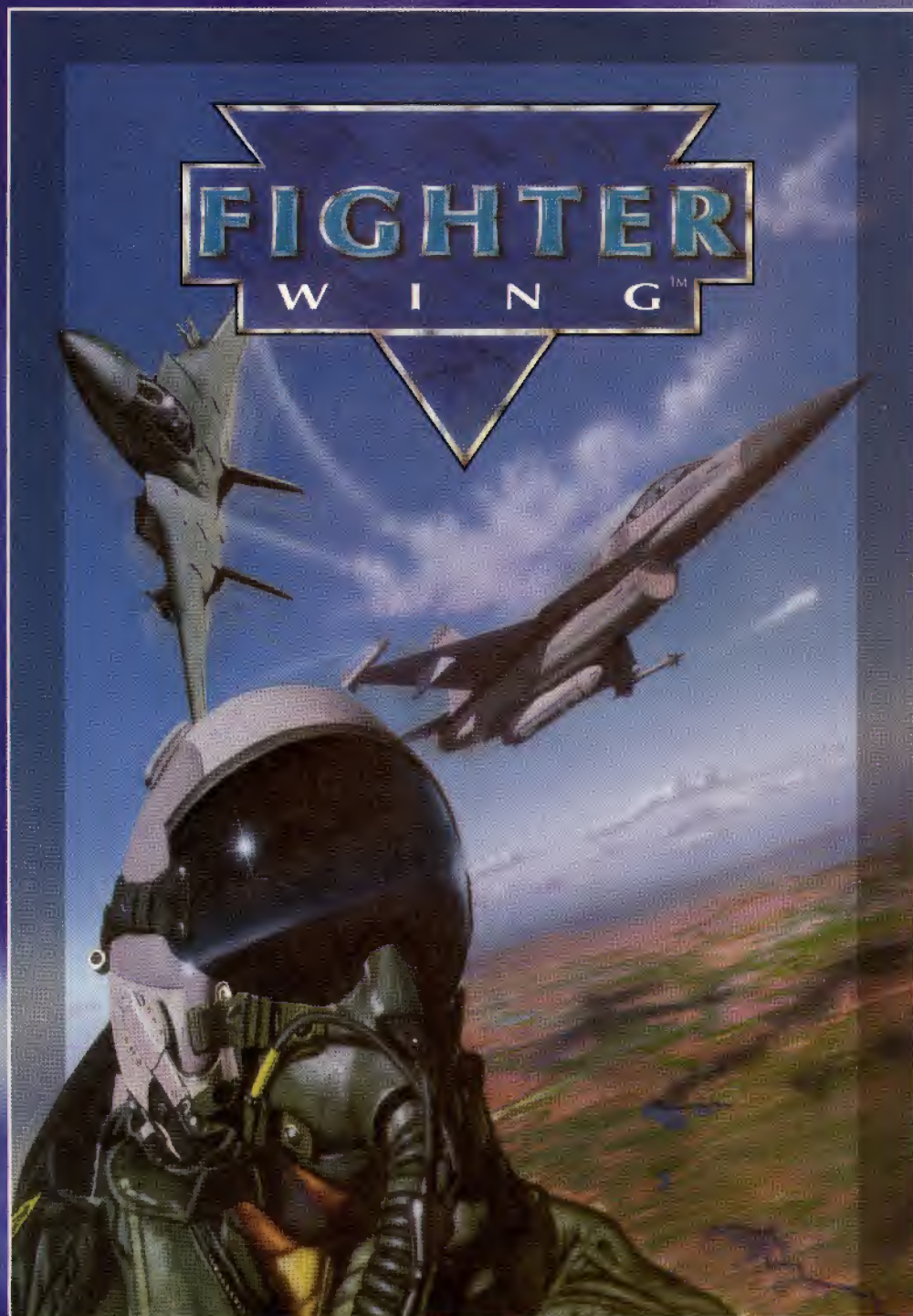
- Supports all VGA modes up to and including 800x600.
- CD-ROM version features footage from the TV series FIREPOWER.
- Supports up to sixteen players over a Local Area Network.
- Geographically correct terrain from some of the world's most explosive warzones.
- Choose from over a dozen American or Russian built aircraft.

*"has a state-of-the-art 3D render engine"*

*PC Power*

*"it plays like a dream, looks utterly fab... a slick-looking sit-and-shoot experience that will appeal to everyone"*

*PC Zone*



Available on PC CD ROM and 3.5" Floppy from February '95  
RRP £39.95



progress (or the lack of it) is constantly illustrated via a "Dad's Army" style map, complete with sweeping arrows, and there is the option to compare what you've done and where you've been with what really happened. Demoralising or what?

## Heroes & villains

Exactly what you do and what you control is directly linked to your rank. If you enter at Grunt level you'll be expected to follow orders as they filter down from above and take part in the action via your tank. That's not to say you're limited as to what you can do - bravery and heroism are rewarded with medals and promotion. If, for some strange reason, you fancy your chances against that posse of Tigers your gunner has just spotted over the hill, you can break

(Far right) There's a built-in on-line database of all the materials, men and tactics of European armoured warfare, so you can check out exactly what's what.



your formation and embark on a good ol' heroic charge. Don't expect your unit to follow you though, they're not that stupid. Jim's especially pleased with the game's AI and believes it to be one of the most sophisticated ever developed: "Units behave appropriately considering the situation. If it looks like they're gonna get their arses kicked, they will turn and run!"

It's all in real time, too - it gets dark at night, clouds sweep over the horizon and summer quickly turns to cold winter, your troops get bogged down, supply channels seize up and morale bottoms out to an all-time low if you don't keep your men fed and watered. It's really more of a logistical balancing act when you're playing at being a general than a battle simulator, but then that's what war on this large scale is all about - man and resource management.

If you get fed up with sitting back in your office, pushing arrows around, you can always transport yourself to any of your

units to see what's happening on the front line. If your tank gets blasted, however, and you have to limp back to base, don't expect the war to wait until you get back, they'll just carry on without you.

## Wot, no manual?

Well, not exactly. ATR does come with two manuals (one explaining how to play the game and one providing historical background) that notch up an altogether hefty 400 or so pages. But fear not, the Gold version of the game will feature a sort of multimedia on-line guide that will explain how the game works as you play. This not only gives you valuable background information and hints at how you might like to play the game, but also serves as an interesting diversion to the main game as it's packed with contemporary video footage, stills, maps, charts and archive film. There are even plans to include a 45-minute documentary on a separate CD-ROM to complete the package.

Even though it's not quite complete yet, Jim is already looking at a multi-player version of ATR which will allow five or six players to play over a network or modem, while there's also talk of a scenario disc that will include new weapons and vehicle (possibly a couple of SS units).

And, if all goes well, we might even see *Across the Desert* - a completely new game set around the British scramble for Africa. This one will run and run. **Z**



(Right) The interface is intuitive and comprehensive - pull down menus and point-and-click functions simplify battle tactics.

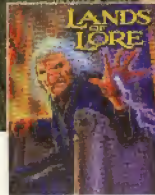
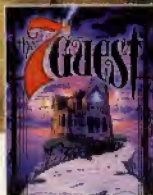
(Below) Sit back behind enemy lines and watch your whole battle plan crumble, or get in there for some first-person turret-twistin' 3D combat.





# Can you resist the **temptation?**

AN **IRRESISTIBLE** GAMES COMPILATION FOR PC CD-ROM



The 7th Guest™ "THE 7TH GUEST WILL COMPLETELY STUN YOU" PC REVIEW "YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO TEAR YOURSELF AWAY" PC FORMAT "UTTERLY STUNNING" PC PLAYER  
Hand of Fate™ "THERE ARE FEW GAMES AVAILABLE WHICH COME ANYWHERE NEAR THE HIGH STANDARD OF THIS" PC REVIEW  
Lands of Lore™ "THE GAME IS A MASTERPIECE OF MODERN PROGRAMMING" CD ROM TODAY  
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**DARK FORCES**  
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**COMPLETE WINDOWS**  
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**KLIK 'N' PLAY**  
29.99 CD

**ENCARTA 95**  
59.99 CD

**IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE**  
C = CGA (Colour Graphics Adaptor)  
E = EGA (Enhanced Graphics Adaptor)  
V = VGA (Video Graphics Array)  
SV = Super VGA  
286/386 = Min machine requirement  
+ = NEW item  
MB = Minimum requirement of RAM  
HD = High Density  
RATED 18 - We only accepted faxed or postal orders. Please sign and state "I am over 18"

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ACES OVER EUROPE	13.99
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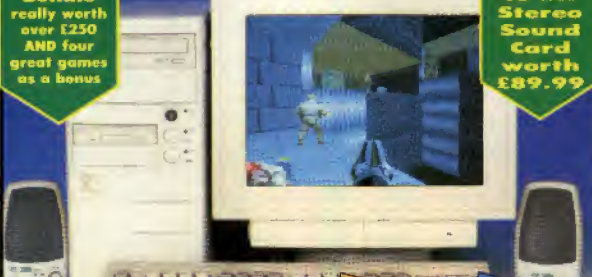
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# Blueprint

## Daedalus Encounter

PUBLISHER: Virgin Interactive

PRICE: TBA

TELEPHONE: 0181 960 2255

RELEASE DATE: April

At the risk of sounding shallow, it has to be said that the main reason most people are interested in this game is because Tia Carrere is in it. **John Davison** looks to see if there's anything else interesting about it.

T

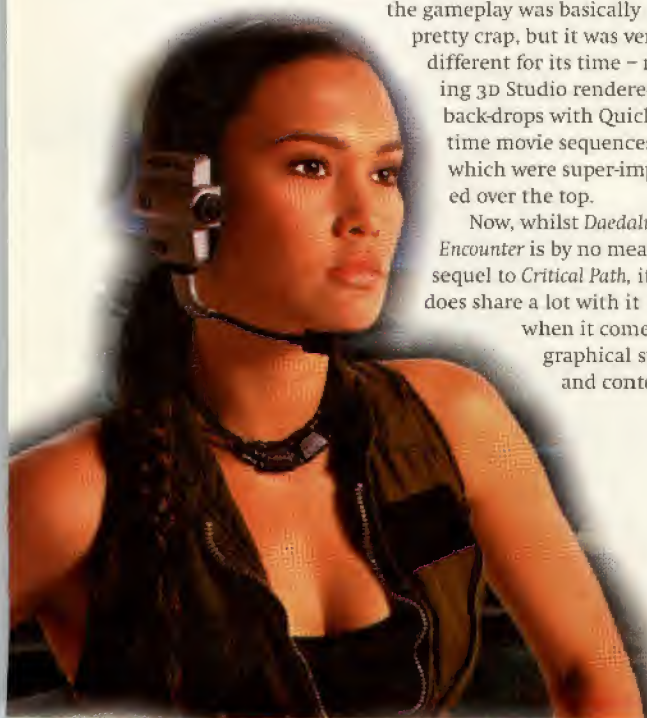
HERE ARE A FEW sad people who might go out and buy this title just because it's got Tia Carrere (the "babe interest" from *Wayne's World*) in a very tight-fitting, low-cut, black leather thing. To be honest, from the marketing gumpf we've seen so far, I'd say that Virgin seems to be relying on this tactic quite heavily. All the promotional pictures have the (admittedly extremely attractive) heroine of the game, slinking around holding a big gun and looking dead cute... but there has to be more to it than this, surely?

The programming team behind the game is Mechadeus, which you may have come across before. Although relatively new to the PC gaming market, the team's first game, *Critical Path*, received rather a lot of media attention. Admittedly, the attention wasn't particularly positive because the gameplay was basically pretty crap, but it was very different for its time - mixing 3D Studio rendered back-drops with Quicktime movie sequences, which were super-imposed over the top.

Now, whilst *Daedalus Encounter* is by no means a sequel to *Critical Path*, it does share a lot with it when it comes to graphical style and content.

(Far right) The little, round, floating, metallic thingy is actually you. You zip around the place, generally being clever and robot like.

(Below) Tia, in all her right-fitting glory.



### Something new?


The basic idea here is that this is an "interactive movie" (arrrrrggghhh!!!), which is interspersed with action and puzzle sequences. Imagine if you will a concoction produced from combined juices of *7th Guest*, *Journeyman Project* and *Creature Shock*, involving single-screen, spatial-reasoning puzzles, a bit like those in *7th Guest*, and extremely simple, first-person perspective shooting scenes.

You play the role of Casey, a 22nd century commando type who has been so severely mutilated during the wars that his body has been discarded and his consciousness transferred into a highly advanced floating probe thing which seems to act a bit like a miniature R2 D2 with no legs, er, if you see my meaning.

Accompanying you are two pals - Ari (who is played by Tia Carrere) and Zack (some bloke called Christian Bocher who is apparently a bit famous, but not very) with the three of you having landed jobs as a space-ship salvage crew. However, just as things seem to be going well, you come across a weird organic spacecraft, which accidentally collides with your own ship and destroys it. Fine, fair enough... any good salvage crew can commandeer a new

ship. Unfortunately, though, the organic craft is so incredibly alien that you and your chums just can't work out how to fly it... and only happens to be on a collision course with a nearby star. Now, as you can imagine, this is cause for a suitably large degree of concern and is, predictably, where you take over the adventure.

When we saw *Daedalus Encounter* for preview it was at an extremely early stage of development. However, the Quicktime video footage is of a very high quality, even now, running in near full-screen in VGA and in a window about a third of the size of the screen in SVGA.

Hopefully we'll be able to bring you a review of the game very soon, along with an exclusive interview with Tia Carrere... 





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# Blueprint

## Top Gun

PUBLISHER: MicroProse

PRICE: TBA

TELEPHONE: 01454 326532

RELEASE DATE: May



Talk about "Take Your Breath Away". MicroProse breaks the mould with its fabulous new flight sim.

**Jeremy Wells** was there to watch the mallets fly. (Eh?)



THINK THAT we can all agree that *Top Gun* is still the best air combat film ever made, if you can forgive the rather hammy performance of Hollywood's favourite midget. Well, those clever bods at MicroProse know this and have decided to build a game around the movie. "Bit late, isn't it?" I hear your cry - ah, now that's where you're mistaken. Apparently the men in suits are talkin' about *Top Gun 2* - if the cheesy-grinned one is up for it that is, so maybe it's a bit of a shrewd move. But enough movie news, I'll leave that to Bazza.

In the game you play the part that Tom Cruise plays in the film: the fly-by-the-seat-of-his-pants ace Maverick (so he's not actually in it - hurrah!). You start off at the Top Gun Academy, pitting your skills against other ace pilots, and prove yourself to be the cocky little smart arse you are in the film. There are loads of different and quite easy missions to fly, which enable you to get familiar with your plane and its controls - like flying against Cubans in Mig 23s. This is also the part of the game that will support multi-player missions and head to heads, which should sort the men from the boys, but then this is the US navy we're talking about here. In case you're wondering, they've put the option in here so that it doesn't interfere too much with the rest of the game and the plot.

### The mission movie mix

Once you have proved yourself to be an F-14 whizz kid, you and your faithful compadre graduate from the Top Gun school and start your campaign proper.

Theatres of operations include missions in Cuba, Libya and Korea, and although there will be over 50 missions to complete,



your real aim is to find out where those mysterious black planes are coming from and take them out. Spectrum Holobyte (MicroProse's sister company in the US) has taken care to make the most out of all the sub plots contained within the film in an effort to give the game greater depth, while still remaining faithful to the atmosphere and action of the original film. As a result, most of the characters are involved in some way (Goose, Ice Man), and the game uses movie footage and newly-shot scenes in an attempt to weave together both story and sim.

Apart from looking absolutely stunning in the graphics department (as you can see for yourselves from the screen shots) the sound effects and music transform this game into a full multi-media experience. The slickly produced on-line help and instruction means that even novices can be up and flying, with their first kill under their belts within half an hour of loading the game.

If it's easy to learn that's not to say that it lacks authenticity or depth. To make the planes look spot on the designers scanned in textures of photos of actual F-14s and mapped them onto the computer-generated frame work. The cockpit and keyboard area (which took around three months to put together) is as accurate as it can be, while the

terrain is made up of bitmaps, voxes and texture maps, whatever does the job best considering the player's viewpoint.

### Seat of your pants flying

The plane handles like a dream and is built around a simplified but authentic flight model, so you can do all the things that you're supposed to and even some that you can't (like fly upside-down over an enemy fighter and take a picture of its cockpit). From the outside view you can see all the weapons and bombs hanging off the fuselage, the wings sweep back when you give it some throttle, the tails move, you even get a sonic boom when the jet reaches the speed of sound along with a token puff of white smoke - it really is that detailed. They're even considering including a first-person perspective eject sequence, so you can see what went through Goose's mind before he hit the water very hard and turned himself into fish food. Cool. ☺

## What do I have to turn off?

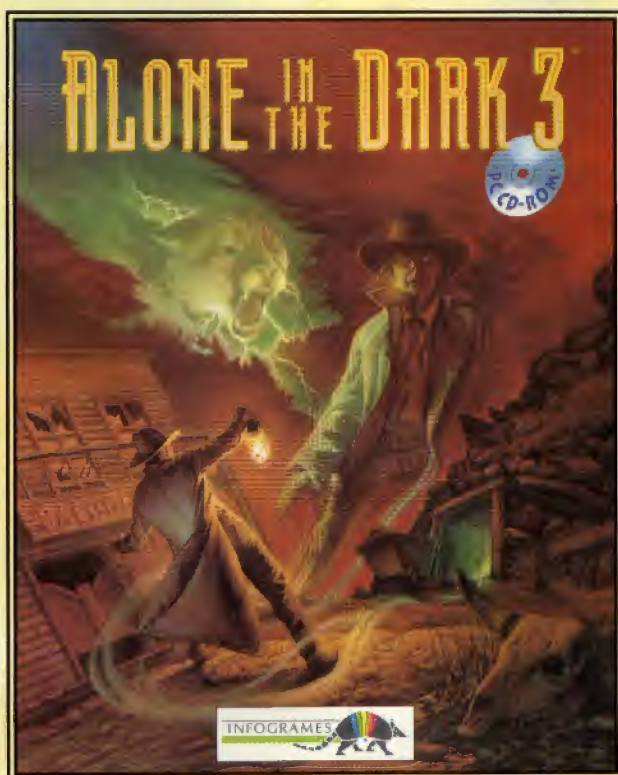
The usual downer with such luxurious detail is that you need a Ninja-bast machine just to be able to play the basic game. Despite the fact that the basic entry level machine in the States is now a 486DX2 66 8 Meg RAM with a double-speed CD-ROM drive and a built-in modem (retails - cringe - for around the \$1,000 mark), the developers have built in various graphics modes to enable mere mortal machine owners to configure the game to match the capabilities of their machine. If you've got a Pentium (and it's not bugged) you're laughing, and you can play the game in full hi-res mode with all the cloud details, water movement/reflections turned on. Lesser machines can make do either with switching to a lower resolution or switching some of the detail off to speed things up (a bit like *NASCAR Racing*) to get the best mix of speed and detail. Spectrum Holobyte, however, recommends at least a 486 DX33 to do the game justice, while an extra lump of RAM wouldn't go amiss either, but then that's the norm in the US nowadays. Beer's much cheaper too. Bummer.

(Right) Hands up who wanted to be Tom Cruise when the film *Top Gun* came out? Yes, I thought so. I bet some of you even went and had your hair cut just like him and hung around the park near the swings with your fake Raybans on trying to look cool.





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# Blueprint

## Fighter Wing

PUBLISHER: Merit Software

PRICE: £29.99

TELEPHONE: 0191 385 7755

RELEASE DATE: Out now

Yes, it's another flight sim, but this time without the heavy learning curve. **Chris Anderson** takes a look.



(Above) All tooled up and there's no-one around. I must have scared them all off.

(Right) Fighter Wing has all the external views you'd expect from a flight sim. It looks pretty neat from the cockpit too.

(Below) THE perfect take off.



MERIT SOFTWARE (of *Isle of The Dead* and *Dr Radiakt* fame) is taking a break from producing *Doom* clones to work on a flight sim with a difference.

*Fighter Wing* will (allegedly) have a very realistic flight engine to challenge experienced PC pilots, while at the same time include an option for beginners which enables them to simply fly around the place shooting things. Merit claims the graphics (up to 800x600 in SVGA mode) are superior to those in *Strike Commander* and *Fleet Defender*, which both used texture-mapping to great effect. The designers of *Fighter Wing* say



that their 3D render graphics engine will provide a far more realistic environment to fly around in than either of these games. There will be no career option in this offering, but players will be able to fly any of today's American or Russian planes in several combat scenarios, each one more difficult to complete than the last.

### Networking the skies

Perhaps the most impressive thing about *Fighter Wing* at this stage of its development is the multi-player option. The game can be played over a local area network with up to 16 players on two teams. There are seven special multi-player missions, which range from simple dogfight scenarios (both teams fly around blowing each other up until one of them ceases to exist) to missions which force the teams to think strategically in order to win. A good example of this is the "Capture the Flag" scenario. This concept has been lifted from a computer game in which the objective is, spookily enough, to capture your opponent's flag, except in this case it's not a flag you're after, it's a plane. Both teams split their members up into attacking and defensive ranks, and work together to outwit their opponents and, eventually, capture their plane and win. Okay, it might sound a bit crap in theory, but the original game is very addictive, so a wacky flight sim version could work well if Merit can strike the right balance between strategy and out-and-out dogfighting.

Multi-player piloting aside, *Fighter Wing* should also have plenty to keep solo players busy, considering the variety of the missions available and the impressive list of planes to choose from. It doesn't offer quite as many planes as the ill-fated *Dogfight* from MicroProse, which, although it allowed you to fly about in lots of different planes, suffered from awful graphics and a suspect flight engine, but you can fly any of today's modern fighter planes. These make mission preparation more challenging as you not only have to select the right weapons for your aircraft but also the correct plane to fly if you are to be sure of successfully completing your task.

Extra goodies on the CD version include video footage from *FirePower*, a weekly Disc-

overy Channel TV series, which I'm sure you've all heard of and love.

On paper, *Fighter Wing* looks as though it could be the multi-player flight sim extravaganza we've all been waiting for, though whether it will knock *Doom* off its network game of the century pedestal, we won't know until we see the finished version. Watch this space. **Z**





# ENEMY ACTION



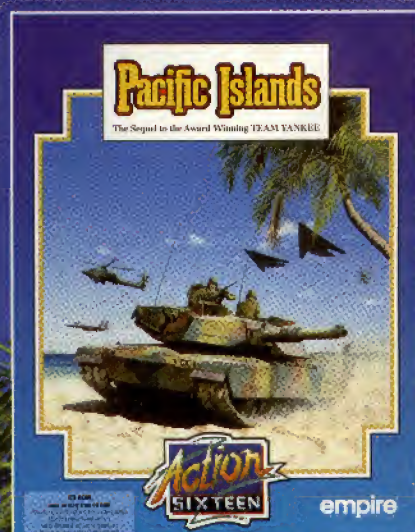
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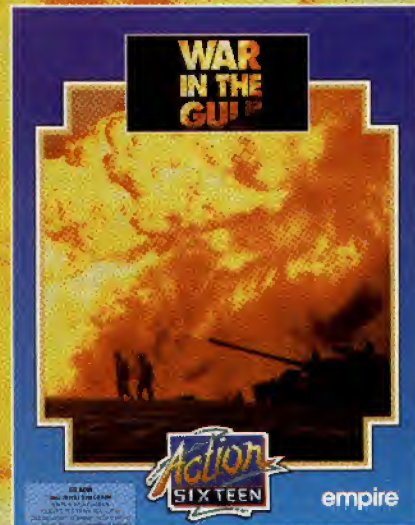
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# Blueprint

## Virtua Chess

PUBLISHER: Titus

PRICE: tba

TELEPHONE: 0171 700 2119

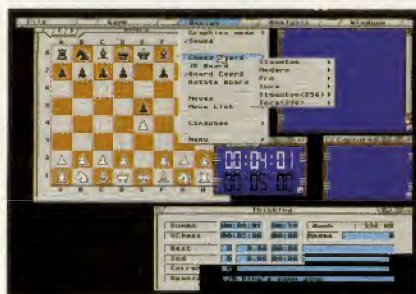
RELEASE DATE: 2nd Quarter

(Right) The three-dimensional board can be rotated and zoomed so that you can view the game from pretty much wherever you want.



**I**T'S HARDLY THE SORT of thing you would expect to set the world afire with, now is it? I mean, c'mon... to be brutally honest, no-one in their right mind is going to go any particular shade of bananas over a chess game, regardless of how mind-bogglingly intelligent it might be. Well, Titus is convinced that *this* chess game is going to be different. Not only does *Virtua Chess* have the obligatory hyper intelligent, pan-dimensional brain box, which can out-think a brainy person at ten paces, but it also has a rather snazzy list of features hidden up its sleeves.

(Right) Virtua chess utilises a unique window system that enables you to have both two- and three-dimensional boards on screen at the same time as well as windows containing a variety of other bits of info.



### So what's so special?

Now, it goes without saying that any new "heavy" chess game is going to be a bit on the good side. The French team responsible for this particular "heavy" chess game is totally convinced that it can out-think *Chessmaster 4000* without breaking into a sweat, and the AI is more than a match for *Kasparov's Gambit*. Not at all bad when you consider that both of these products are more than capable of giving Grand Masters a run for their money.

Aside from this, though, *Virtua Chess* offers network play (something that seems to be standard issue on all games these



days), a variety of different chess piece designs, some fancy Silicon Graphics rendered cut-scenes, full svga support up to and including 1,024x768 in 256 colours, and finally the "Virtua" bit.

You have to admit that having the word "Virtua" and "Chess" linked together is a little unusual, but in this case I have to admit that it is appropriate. You see, as we as the very nicely presented traditional two dimensional board, the game also features a three-dimensional polygon-generated board, which can be moved and zoomed in to any position that you desire. What is rather impressive, though, is that this board can be on screen in a window at the same time as the two-dimensional board and a number of other windows containing information, including moves, a clock, pieces taken and all manner of other information. Pretty impressive... especially when all of the windows are updated simultaneously.

### What next?

So why has Titus opted to launch the next phase of its development with a chess title then? Well, according to Titus' PR manager Simon Jones "Titus isn't afraid to fill in the gaps that other software houses wouldn't necessarily look at. *Virtua Chess* is a very strong title in its field, and although you wouldn't expect it to have massive appeal in the computer games market, we have had a lot of interest from the hard-core chess mob."

Expect to see *Virtua Chess* on CD-ROM in the next couple of months, with a Windows version following in the summer. All being well we'll be bringing you a review of the product next month. **Z**





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# Blueprint

## Virtual Pool

PUBLISHER: Interplay

PRICE: TBA

TELEPHONE: 0235 821666

RELEASE DATE: April/May



WHEN I HEARD that Interplay were working on a new pool game, I was a little perturbed as to why anyone would want to cover such old ground. Surely

it's all been done before with *Jimmy White* and *Archer Maclean*? What more can you add to such a limited genre? They've never sold well, have constrained scope and are likely to appeal to only a limited audience.

Steve Chaplin, the president of Celeris (the company who are developing *Virtual Pool* for Interplay), used to play a lot of pool (in fact, he almost turned professional) and he would beg to disagree. He maintains that the reason previous pool sims have never sold well is because they were never very playable, just as golf sims were never best sellers until *Links* came along.

There are a lot of pool players out there (in the States, there are even more) and Steve reckons that if it's approached in the right way, pool on the PC could be just as much a success as *Links*. Thing is, though, like all the best golf games, it has got to be realistic, graphically stunning and, of course, playable, especially in multi-player tournament mode. *Virtual Pool* is.

### The baize essentials

Although *Virtual Pool* (VP) is still very much in development at the moment, it already looks and plays very differently from previous baize-based games. Celeris have gone for realism in a big way - hence the rather pretentious moniker. The result is a beautifully crafted "virtual room" containing a

(Right and below) By altering the view you are able to get a nice close-up of your cue ball or see the whole table set up and the pockets.

pool table, that, via your mouse, you can walk around, lean over, crouch next to and even look under. And it's all in glorious 256 colours at a resolution of 640x480. To keep things running smoothly, the bods at Celeris are also aiming at a frame rate of at least 20 frames per second (it usually plays nearer 30), and to ensure that the game runs whatever graphics card you're using, they have taken the rather unusual step of writing video for specific cards to deliver maximum performance.

Pool is ultimately all about physics, and Celeris have put all its expertise, gained through developing sims and military software, to good use in producing what it claims to be the most accurate physical model ever. Celeris has had world-championship players in to test it out and all of them confirm that it's as close as you can get to playing the real thing. This is largely down to the extremely quick and easy-to-use interface, which allows you to interact directly and physically with the virtual environment in front of you. Instead of clicking on various icons and then a power bar to make your shot (as you do with every other pool/snooker and, indeed, golf sim), you draw your cue by pulling your mouse back, and the speed with which you push the mouse forward again determines how hard you'll hit the cue ball. You can also add spin to the ball, raise the butt of your cue and alter the power or aim of your shot by tapping a key to gain even greater control. It is a little weird at first, but once you've played a couple of shots, it becomes almost second nature, proving very quick and easy to use. After just one frame you'll wonder why no one's ever done it before.

### Frame anyone?

There are currently six or so opponents and three different types of pool-based games to choose from, which may or may not be familiar, depending on which side of the Atlantic you live on. I can't really comment

"It's all in the way you flick your wrist," maintained **Jeremy Wells**, after a rather speedy eight-ball clearance. He, of course, failed to mention that his opponent was that legendary cue master "Tunnel-Vision Tim", that he had taken copious advantage of the "Retake shot" option and played each and every shot with the tracking on.



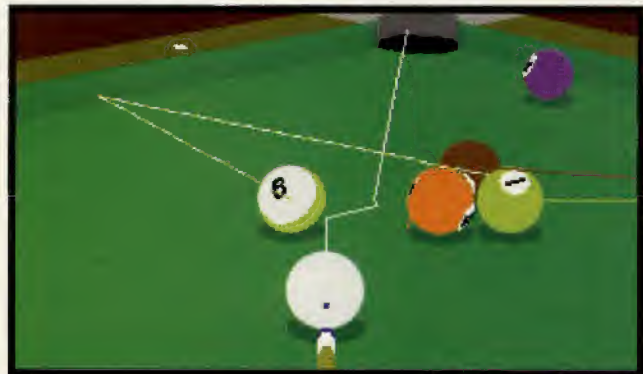
on the game's AI at the moment, because there isn't really any to speak of. Even Phil Fowler and Dead Eye Dan were beaten to a pulp on my second visit to the table (but I have to admit that I was using the ball-tracking device). In two-player tournament mode, however, this type of game really comes into its own. It's even better played over a network when you can make full use of the cross-talk facility to "encourage" your opponent to make a shot.

Even without the promised multi-media adage that is destined to accompany the product - video clips, a trick-shot section featuring well-known players, computer-generated opponents that are introduced before each match as well as the now obligatory "OTT" intro sequences which now infest almost every CD title - *Virtual Pool* absolutely exudes gameplay and, hopefully, the speed and playability won't suffer when all the "enhancements" are included.

This is "bare-bones gameplay" at its best and yes, there is a Snooker game using the same engine on the way. **Z**

(Below) The ball-tracking device can make even the crappiest of Pool players a Hurricane Higans.

(Below right) You're even able to pivot the cue for that vital spin.





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# Blueprint

## Tank Commander

PUBLISHER: Domark

PRICE: £39.99

TELEPHONE: 0181 780 2222

RELEASE DATE: March

**We asked Patrick McCarthy to produce a penetrating look at the current state of the collective human consciousness, expounded through a complicated allegory that takes the form of a Rabelaisian computer game review. He said okay.**

# H

Ed.) Damn.

The games industry, just like the film industry, likes to work in batches. Except you don't just get games of a similar genre in development at once, you get games in the same subsection of a genre; we've had flight sim helicopter game phases, and harrier jump jet phases, and life at the moment is one long *Doom*-like phase. Now it seems that we're going through a bit of a minor tank game phase. And not just any old tank game phase, but a tank-game-that's-used-the-ground-bits-from-a-flight-sim phase.

Why, just the other day we were laughing our merry way through *Armoured Fist*. (Tank games always bring us closer together as a team; we insist on sitting on each other's laps and stuffing our boots in each other's mouths to authenticate the complete tank experience.) And *Armoured Fist* uses the ground bits from *Comanche*. Now, the people who brought you *AV8B Harrier Assault* (AV8B) have used the ground bits from that to bring you *Tank Commander*. "Hold on just one tiny gosh-darned minute," you're probably thinking, "I seem to remember that the ground bits from AV8B, while not exactly minimalist, were somewhat unimpressive by today's standards and, while being more than adequate for a flight sim and ensuring that the game ran at a fair old rate, are scarcely the kind of things that would impress from a height commensurate while sitting inside a tank." Well, you would think that, wouldn't you.

AVE YOU EVER wiped your fundament on a March-born cat? What about the neck of a goose? Curtains are a laugh - (We were joking about the Rabelais.



But there's all sorts of texture mapping and other top-notch contemporary graphical effects that sound good on a press release, so just shut it.

### Yankee go home

One of the nice things about AV8B was that it didn't feature good old American-apple pie planes, ridding the skies of the pinko menace; it was the good old Harrier (although I seem to remember that MicroProse's Harrier game - which was crap - tried to pretend it was American anyway). And similarly, one of the nice things about *Tank Commander* is that it isn't just

yet another American Abrams-against-Russian T80 jobs: in this game, you get to use a British tank.

Of course, being a British tank, at least you know it won't have retro bad taste chrome-work or huge fins, but unfortunately, there's also a fair chance that it will have a pretty nob name. And it has. How nob, though - the Morris Marauder? The Austin Armoured Avenger?

Nothing so hard-sounding unfortunately: you'll be driving a Challenger.

There's a psychological blow for your boys right from the start, if ever I heard one. You can just hear the enemy soiling

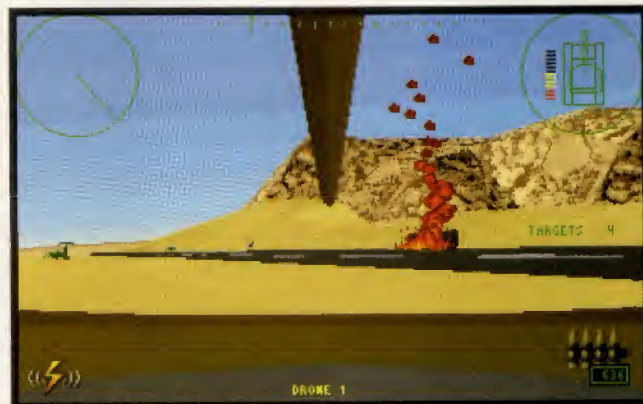
their underwear (and reaching for a rabbit at the sound of it, can't you? You might just

**"Of course, being a British tank, at least you know it won't have retro bad taste chrome-work or huge fins..."**

(Right) Fight your way through designated Green Belts, parched desert landscapes and icy wastes. Or not, if you don't want to.







(Above) Bang.

(Left) Kaboom. Pow.

as well call it the Second best and be done with it.

But, over ten man years – it says here – have been spent ensuring that the tanks in the game are accurately modelled – which, depending on how you look at it, means that they've either had 20 people working on it for six months, or a dwarf has been at it since 1975.

## Check out that "flight model"

People who know about these things say that AV8B had a pretty good flight model – especially if you switched to the advanced mode, which was so accurate it seemed to have been designed 'specially to help you in your efforts to crash into the aircraft carrier's bridge. Fortunately, a tank is a little less twitchy than a Harrier – at least in theory. This isn't the case here, though. At the moment, where the slightest touch on the steering sends the tank leaping from side to side. The same thing happens when trying to get a bead on a target. It seems strange to speak of a jittery-handling tank, but this one's like Katherine Hepburn after a gallon of espresso. Hopefully a little more work still has to be done.

## The "guys"

When setting out on your mission, you'll

be given a choice of people to man the tank. These are helpfully varied in nationality to ensure colourful background chat with humorous accents, and confusion during turns making the tea. There's even a fat bloke to balance the tank, for when you have to do one of those tricky missions along the side of a slope. (Unfortunately he won't do much for the crew's collective chances of picking up chicks after the mission, because he looks rather too much like Benny from *Crossroads* – although not quite so millinerly challenged.)

## Helicopter fly-bys

Rather than plunging wildly into the mission, like Eric Cantona into a Sarf Landoner's chest, you're going to have the option of sizing-up your chances of getting out again, in the form of a helicopter fly-by. Unfortunately, at the moment there doesn't seem to be an "Ooh, that one looks a bit tricky, I think I'll report sick today," option. We can but hope.

The satellite view used for mission planning, which can be zoomed in and out to plan troop movements, set primary targets

"If you shoot an enemy soldier... he comes out with a little 'Ow,' and falls over. Bizarre."

and all that stuff, seems very similar to the one from AV8B.

Missions take place in different environments, including everything from desert to tundra scenarios, and the weapons available to you will include big and small cannons, along with flame throwers for when the cigar lighter breaks down.

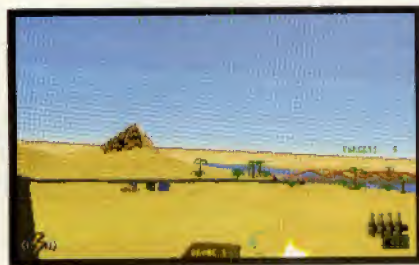
## Sound effects

At the moment, there's a strangely humorous effect when you shoot enemy soldiers and it's rather disturbing, because we don't think it's funny or clever to shoot people. You know those really big guns that

tanks have? If you shoot an enemy soldier with yours, he comes out with a little "Ow," and falls over. Bizarre. I suppose that's British tanks for you: if you were

using any other tank's big gun, there simply wouldn't be enough of him left to fall over. Come to think of it, most of the surrounding countryside would be redistributed, too.

It's games like this that make the wonderful world of computer games so fascinating. For all I know, none of these features mentioned could be in the finished version. One feature that will be though, and one that will help sell the game, is the network facility, which allows for up to 16 players to play at once. For the rest, you'll have to wait for the review to find out. **Z**



(Far left) The legendary Gez, the Russell Grant of the tank crew world. (Middle) The hills have size. (Left) Find the nearest pub on the handy map view. (You always say that. Ed.)





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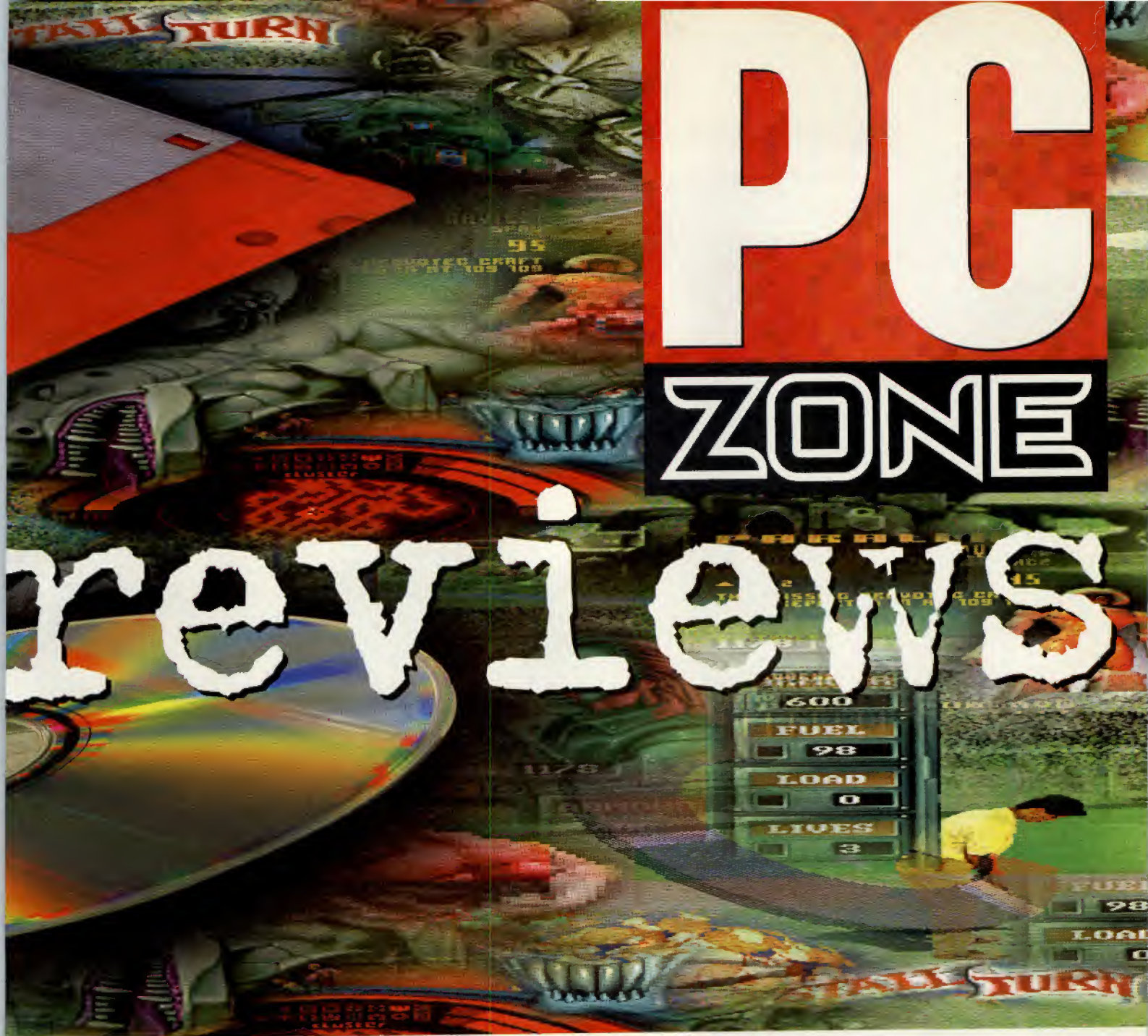
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Games reviews are what **PC ZONE** is all about, and over the next 100 or so pages you'll find loads! All games receive an overall mark out of 100 and are scored according to the following guidelines:

#### 90+ (PCZONE Classic)

Highly-original idea, expertly executed, utterly flawless in all departments and boasting long-term playability.

#### 80-89 (PCZONE Recommended)

High degree of originality and extremely well executed in all but one department.

#### 70-79

Strong idea and well executed, though not necessarily very original. Weaknesses do not impair playability and it has a reasonably long life.

#### 60-69

Adequate. Games falling into the "If you like this style of game you'll like this, if not you won't" category.

#### 50-59

Seen it all before. Take it or leave it. Not a terrible game, but definitely not exactly fab either.

#### 40-49

Dodgy but playable (probably only once).

#### 39 & Below

Seriously weak - avoid at all costs!

#### Specs Box

Check out the Specs Box for a guideline as to what memory, graphic and sound support you will need to run the game, and if you're still not sure what we're on about the In Perspective box should give you an idea as to how the game compares with others of its genre.

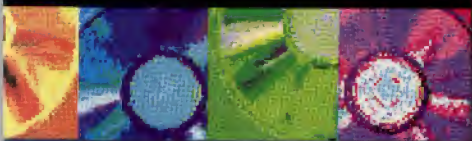
#### WHAT'S IN OUR DISK CADDIES?

**S**ome PC games get played, others get nicked, some get binned. Here's what's on our harddrives/in our disk caddies this month:

BioForge  
Doom II (still!)  
Dark Forces  
Magic Carpet  
Lost Eden  
Doom II (network)  
...er, Doom II?

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We thought Patrick McCarthy would be most at home in the scary, biologically-interfered-with world of *BioForge*. He's already got the peculiar body and extraordinary physical strength. And the shiny head.



# BioForge



(Right) Lex does the electric door boogie.



**L**IFE CAN BE HARD. One minute you're whizzing through space, immersed in a good book, doing your washing or darning your space socks, when suddenly everything goes black. The next thing you know, you're waking up and someone who looks like the Gestapo officer from *The Secret Army* is standing over you in a blood-spattered, futuristic doctor's outfit. These space parties can get pretty wild. And it's not even Christmas. The hunky Gestapo officer reaches lingeringly towards you... and plunges a large circular saw into your abdomen. You try to remember how long you've been into this sort of thing, or failing that, the secret word to get him to leave your abdomen alone. Your mind seems strangely blank, and you decide that it's probably best to lose consciousness again.

You come round in a cell, under the watchful gaze of a Watchful Gaze Robot™. It has a huge hypodermic syringe attached to its protruding arm, but you decide that you've had enough of that sort of thing for the moment. Then you notice your body – you have large pieces of metal where bone used to be. You have more electrical components than *Dixons*. You only have two fingers on each hand.

(Above) No, it's not a scene from *Rise of the Robots* – it's about a zillion times more involved.

(Below Left) Lex goes for another world record – ripping the lid of the biggest sardine can ever made.

(Below Right) Don't worry too much about this bloke – he isn't dangerous, in fact he's quite armless (ha ha).



(What are the rest of the boys in the band going to say?) And you still can't remember a thing. Who are you? What are you doing here? More to the point, what did they do with your Thingy? How are you going to go to the toilet?

Being naturally rather miffed at being tinkered with without your permission, you decide that "escape from the cell" is number one on your list of today's "For Action" tasks. Beating the crap out of the Watchful Gaze Robot™ is a start, if only because it has an annoying voice. Then it's out of the cell and... what?

### Why, you're... beautiful

As you can see from the screenshots, *BioForge* is a bit of a stunner in the visuals department. And, unlike many games that look this good, all that excellent scenery can be fully explored. You won't find, to huge disappointment, that there's only a couple of pre-determined paths to walk down and a choice to make at the end. You can walk about in the rooms, passageways and tunnels to your heart's content. If you see a computer console or a set of buttons, you can interact with them. Everything is there for a purpose. (You can even use remote-controlled robots with some of them). And for once, it's not just the backgrounds that look so good: all of the characters are bitmapped to high heaven, as well, so instead of having those weird plastic faces and plastic lycra clothes, so popular in many games nowadays, everyone's clomping about in bloody great heavy-duty spacesuits.

### Rage against the machinery

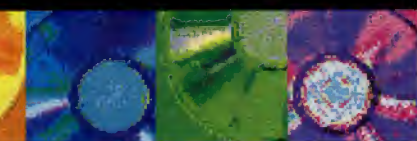
Let's quickly allay your remaining suspicions and say that, again unlike every other game that looks this good, *BioForge* also equally well endowed in the gameplay department. You don't find yourself sitting back watching things happen for minutes at a time, wondering why it's called a game at all. There are puzzley bits, a lot of combat bits (both armed and unarmed), tense bits, race-against-time bits, unfolding plot bits and even tragically moving bits. (Sort of. You probably won't cry, though.) In fact, if you had to quickly sum up the gameplay you'd say it had elements in common with such landmark games as *Alone in the Dark*, *Ecstatica*, *System Shock* and *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis*. Which is pretty classy company. So what's it all about?

To start with, you don't really know. All you do know is that you have been transformed into this powerful half-metal and half-flesh monster, and that you've had your brain wiped. Naturally, you're pretty peeved, and set about finding out what's happened to you and getting hold of whoever did it. You quickly discover, through reading various logs that you find in other cells, that the person responsible for your current condition is a Mondite called Dr

Mastaba (the bloke with the circular saw), and that you're not the







only person who's been experimented on in this way, but that you may be the only one who's still alive. (Later you find another, but let's just say you won't have a friend to play with for long.)

### Health and efficiency

To help you on your way, apart from your impressive physical strength, you have an electronically-controlled health and energy system. The energy from your powered suit can be used to restore the health of your remaining biological parts after a scrap, and any batteries you find around the base can be used to power up the suit. Like all adventure/puzzle/arcade/combat (well, you describe it then) games, you also have an inventory to pack to the brim with stuff you find on the floor, like some kind of cyber bag-lady. These range from the obviously useful, like laser blasters and medical devices that seem to work on similar lines to a Dustbuster, to the more tangential, like a flute. (The fact that you manage to play it with only two fingers on each hand is a testament to the human spirit.) You're never in any doubt as to what you've picked up because you always tell yourself what it is.

### Sidetrack 1: Your voice

While we're on the subject, let's talk about your voice, your dialogue and your general behaviour. Frankly, the dialogue's a little weird. While kicking the shite out of someone, is it really normal



(Above) Is it Dirty Dancing in space, or yet another opportunity to give some strange creature a serious kicking?

(Left) See that bloke. That's your doctor that is. Guess why he's wearing a visor? Cos when he cuts you up with his scalpel there's blood everywhere.

to come out with stuff along the lines of, "We're on the same side here. I don't want to hurt you - (CRUNCH) - I just want to hold hands and relate - (SMACK)". Now this is peculiar enough, but sometimes it stretches the grounds of pomposity, verging on "Let that - (BOSH) - be a lesson to you, for getting involved in a far-right organisation with a dubious approach to human rights and a poor taste in company logos, that isn't afraid to use violence to get what it wants - (KABLOOEY)."

### Sidetrack 2: Nobby gestures

Then there's the behaviour. After blowing the hell out of a huge security robot with your blaster, it's just ever so slightly nobbish to

## It's a beat 'em up

Like in *Ecstatica*, the only way you're going to survive the inevitable confrontations with security guards, robots and rampaging mutant dinosaurs is by squaring up to the ne'er-do-well like a latter-day Marquis of Queensbury. (Except, of course, that the Queensbury rules don't actually allow for stamping on people's genitals). The moves available to you are surprisingly varied, given that they're being carried out by a huge, bitmapped main sprite and that this isn't really the main point of the game.

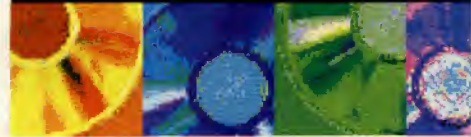
Using the ALT button and the numerical pad, you have two crouching blocks, a low- and high-standing block, a left jab, a left uppercut, a massive right cross, and a two-handed chop that should put somebody's head down near their rectum if it lands. Using the CTRL button and the pad, you have a high roundhouse kick, a high reverse-spinning kick, a head-butt, a kick to what we know around these parts as "the tads," a side kick, and, as recommended by your friendly neighbourhood wing chun instructor, two stamps to the knee. There's also a back somersault, which would probably only get you laughed at in most fights, but is ideal for use at discos while wearing your best 12-button Northern Soul bags, or after scoring a goal for Everton. On top of this, there are authentically wary circling and sidling movements to manoeuvre for position.

Basically, they have the engine here for a superb three-dimensional fighting game. If I were them, I'd bring one out pretty sharpish. All they need to do is design a few mean-looking enclosed arenas, a few more fighting sprites and - most importantly - a network option, and you'd have one of the best one-on-one beat 'em ups around. Especially if they avoided those ridiculous missile-firing special moves that every other beat 'em up has, and stuck to different martial arts styles instead. By the way, if you do bring one out, boys, I'll expect the usual consultancy fee.





(Right) Bloody intergalactic traffic wardens - you just can't park anywhere these days, not even in space.



ay (to yourself), "Eat light, you stupid machine." It doesn't help that your voice is a teeny bit uncool. And punching the air after a successful bit of gunnery hardly smacks of strong, silent avenger-type behaviour, to me. I mean, surely if you had just had your brain wiped, crap American gestures would be among the first to go? But anyway, back to the plot.

### Never pick up aliens

Basically, it helps to throw aside all thoughts of polite behaviour if you want to succeed. It's only by finding and reading other people's diaries and going through their underwear drawers that you start to piece together elements of the story. For a start, you're not the only person that's rampaging about the place, kicking hapless Mondites to death. The other bloke is a large, voracious and seemingly unstoppable alien monster whose hobbies include tunnelling through rock and pulling the legs off Mondites.

This is his planet. A ship called the Ambassadorium came across another ship drifting in space and sent a boarding party to have a look around. It had a bunch of weird creatures aboard, apparently long since dead. On closer examination, one of the creatures showed signs of life, so they took it back to their own ship for further examination, almost as if the entire series of *Alien* films had never been made. Sure enough, the alien was soon up and about and tearing its way through the ship, eating everything in its path like a cross between the aforementioned *Alien* and something out of a Chewitts advert. It was, you might say, distress signal city.

The last surviving crew member made it to an escape shuttle, only to find it had been sabotaged. Rather than simply taking an overdose of laxatives and rendering himself unappetising, he dutifully wrote everything down in a log, and hit the ship's self-destruct button. The Mondites, having inter-

cepted the distress signal, found the two ships and worked out the location of the aliens' homeworld. (One of the aliens had some mittens with his name and address on the inside.) Astonishingly, rather than nuking the planet or wrapping it up completely in hazard warning tape, the Mondites decide to visit it to find some more aliens to play with.

Once the Mondites arrive, they set up an archaeological excavation site next to a large crater, and succeed in getting into the alien creatures' necropolis. They find another one that seems to still have the odd spark of life in it, but it breaks out and sets off on a similar killing spree to its cousin. (Bang goes the old "environment over genetics" theory.) Wrapped up in this bit of the plot, it gradually transpires, is the pouting Doctor Escher, leader of the

## You'll Log

One of the peculiarities of the Mondites' attitudes to prisoners is that, though they clearly feel it's perfectly acceptable to drag people off to the bathroom and rearrange their intestines with a Black & Decker, they don't like to deprive them of the right to literary expression. Thus, you'll find that even though people have been forcibly injected with everything from mind-altering drugs to half a packet of *Vim* in the name of scientific experimentation, or had objects stuck on their bodies that wouldn't look out of place on a shopping trolley, they're always in possession of a log - the futuristic equivalent of a Psion Organiser.

Naturally, with endless vacant hours to fill between visits to the vivisectionists and very little chance of a packet of *Crayolas* and some paper, most victims will choose to exercise their creativity by writing lengthy autobiographies. And, since you're trying to find out as much as possible about what the hell's going on, who you are and why you are here, you have to read the damn things. It isn't exactly what you'd call fun. Their styles tend to veer away from the lightweight holiday read, and toward the heavy-duty slog. If you were to read any of this stuff on the beach you'd end up with third-degree burns from lapsing into a coma in the sun. But it all has to be read, since hidden among the self-referential stuff (usually on the 94th page) are often snippets of useful information, like codes for security doors and the phone number of the nearest Indian restaurant's delivery service.

dig. The Mondites all think she's betrayed them and blame her for the monster's presence; she is convinced Dr Mastaba has shut her

in the dig site on purpose; Dr Mastaba is more concerned with perfecting his new remote-controlled man-machine combos (of which you are the first); you might have to get involved to further your escape; the monster just wants to destroy the nuclear reactor that powers the base (and make it onto the "Collectors' Edition of the

Monster of the Year" cards.) Unfortunately,

the crater is now almost entirely full of acid, some peculiar acid monsters are on the rampage, too (no, not the Oxric Tentacles) and there's also a fair few space marines out to get you.

### Full circle

So, as I was saying earlier, the graphics are superb - and not just the static stuff; even the explosions are impressive (but then, they seem to be getting better in most games.) Camera angles change to

**"...unlike every other game that looks this good, it's also equally well endowed in the gameplay department."**



(Left) The cut scenes are quite spectacular and give the game a great sense of atmosphere.



## It's a shoot 'em up

Fairly early on in the game you'll get yourself a blaster, which you'll find is ideal for blasting things. In some locations it turns out to be a very bouncy form of blaster, which means that you have to be very careful where you fire it. You might, for example, be happily shooting the beaks off robot sparrows sitting on a nearby wall, singing robotic sparrow songs, or something... (alright, I know, I made a poor choice for an example). But if you miss the sparrows and hit the wall instead, you'll be alarmed to see the blast bouncing wildly off everything in sight, usually to come back and smack you on the back of the head. This provides no end of merriment for passing hecklers, but a disturbing drop in health for you.

But it also comes in handy. It means that, by combining your innate marksmanship with a knowledge of angles gleaned from your years as world billiards champion, you can pick off security robots round corners by bouncing shots off walls, coffee tables and cleaning ladies to your heart's content.



frame the action, but never just for the sake of it, and unlike in *Ecstatica*, it isn't so intrusive that it hampers your chance of success. The sound effects are also done well, especially when you're blowing up robots – the sound of metals parts raining down on walkways is very gratifying. The whole thing's very atmospheric – your thudding footsteps doppler past the various cameras, becoming more muffled as you move further away, then louder as the next camera takes over. The attention to detail is excellent – everywhere you look there are machines to play with; maps of the base; or a maintenance data log containing reports of a digging machine being destroyed by a large creature and a request for a replacement; and power failures from where you short-circuited the doors to escape from the cell-block. It all helps to add to the atmosphere. The ambient lighting effects are also pretty impressive – the light from big windows casts shadows across the floor and machinery; rock slides by between the wall panels in the elevator; and faulty lights flicker and crackle.

### Everybody was kung fu fighting

And don't forget the hand-to-hand fighting: it has one of the most comprehensive ranges of moves seen outside a dedicated beat 'em up, with characters that are huge and highly detailed, and all as smooth as a shoe-salesman's knees (well, it was on a Pentium P60).

Be warned – it's not easy. Even at the easiest of the three settings, which makes beating people up a little easier and some of the



(Above) The ever changing camera angles are sometimes a little confusing when you're in combat. You can speed it all up by dumping it all onto your hard drive.



(Right) As you progress through the game, Lex gets more metallic and increasingly shiny. And if you look hard enough you can even see reflections in his body suit.

puzzles simpler, you'll still need to make good use of the nine saved-game spaces. There's a degree of trial and error about some sections; there are tasks that must be completed before others (with no real clue as to the order until you get it wrong and meet a horrible death); and there are sections – like switching off the reactor before it blows up while being attacked by the rock-head alien – that need to be completed within a tight timescale.

For people who've been used to the likes of *Cyberia*, however, this is all wonderful news. Finally, a game that combines outstanding atmospherics with decent gameplay. Just one thing – you'll need a ninja-scopisic machine to play it.



## SCORE

I had something important to say here, but unfortunately my brain's been wiped.

**Minimum Memory:** 8Mb RAM

**Minimum Processor:** 486/66

**Hard Disk Space Required:** 35Mb

**Graphics Modes Supported:** All major cards

**Sound Cards Supported:** All major cards

**Controls:** Keyboard, mouse

**Price:** £??.?? **Release Date:** jh ljj h

**Publisher:** kjhg kjhgkjg **Tel:** ljhg ljj



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(Left) Jax attempts to suspend Reptile in the air without the aid of a safety wire... the power of the mind can be truly awesome.



# Mortal Kombat 2



"But combat isn't spelt with a K," cried **Patrick McCarthy**, before adding philosophically, "Still, I suppose it takes all sorts." That's why we call him the Office Kreeep.

**T**HOSE CRAZY mortal kombatants are back. And this time there's more of them. "Last time," it says here, "they wagered their very lives... This time, they wager much more..." What, then? Their rare jazz collections? Their endowment mortgages? It doesn't explain. Perhaps I just don't catch the metaphysical implications of it all. I don't quite understand all this Outworld business where all the fighting's supposed to take place, or how some people have died and not come back, whereas others

are dead and fighting quite happily with thunder gods and humans and half-Dachshunds from hell, or whatever they're supposed to be. I love beat 'em up plots, although...

## The plot

...But not enough to sit here typing the reams of garbage that constitutes this one out for you. The gameplay's more or less the same as in the original game, except you don't have to fight people two at a time any more: beat up everyone else in the tournament, then beat up the big, evil gits. Whack their nether regions with massive electric shocks, thump them in the chest with harpoons, spit acid in their mouth and rip out their spines and wave them above your head like a football rattle.

The number of fighters has been increased from seven to twelve (although there are a couple of lookalikes in there) and one or two

(Right) Reptile would appear to have a particularly nasty cold and as a result can use his devastating phlegm-blaster special move.



(Above) "Believe me, I feel fantastic. I'll rest my foot on top of your head and then you can just, you know, sort of wriggle about a bit. You'll love it honey."







(Right) The bloke in the hat gives Liu Kang a good kicking.

(Below) That's not fair... he's got a big stick.



changes in the line-up have been made. Oh, and if the characters' names don't sound like Chinese beers, they sound like the latest auxhall prototype.

### Sonya was shite, wasn't she?

She certainly was. And so was Sonya, for that matter. Anyway, *Mortal Kombat's* (MK) Sonya is "missing" from this version, which is why she's here: he's supposed to be looking for her. But we have to have a chick, so that (a) ten-year-old boys have something to look at while they fiddle with themselves and (b) even those adults who are really crap have someone they can always beat up. So, welcome to Kitana and her twin sister Mileena (that certainly saves a little time on the development front) – who, to judge from their names, were born in South London.

Goro, the half-dragon thing from the pit, is no longer with us. He's been superseded by another lump of playdoh with four arms: a big welcome, please, for Kintaro (see what we mean about the auxhall connection?) – who's quicker, more agile and has even tastier breath. These half-dragon people really ought to take a lesson from that nice Clifford off the telly.

### But Johnny Cage is back

Yes, even though he was pretty crap (especially since he was originally supposed to be the star," before Jean-Claude van Damme decided that he didn't want to be beaten up by lumps of plasticine). Unlike poor Sonya, he's been given special treatment, and improved a bit. We still never use him, largely because of his pathetic sunglasses, which might count as "cool" in America, but just make him look like a lesbian tennis player to me.

And Shang Tsung is now usable. Yes, the diminutive 900-year-old psychotic ladies' man with the nice line in dinner party chat can now be used by you. On his own, he's not actually very good because he doesn't have any special moves. But he can morph into any of the other characters, which is always worth doing against someone playing the game for the first time: they get all confused and stop playing for a minute, and you can beat them up.

### Bloody special moves

One of the selling points about this game has always been the finishing moves – when your opponent is on its last legs, it stands there all helpless while Orson Welles urges "Finish him". Then you hold down High Punch and press Down, Down, Up, Block, Away, Away, High Kick, High Punch, Curtsy, and let go of High Punch, and all your opponent's skin falls off and gets made into an art deco lampshade, or something. Or you cock it up and the opponent just falls over out of boredom.



**"Now Shang Tsung – the diminutive 900-year-old psychotic ladies' man – can morph into any of the other characters."**

The thing that winds me up is that, they never put these things in the sodding manual. To find them out, you have to buy about 50 console mags and pore over the scarcely legible text, like some kind of Egyptologist with Tutankhamun's laundry list. And it's worse this time, because you don't just get the Fatality moves (absurd gore galore), you get

the Babality moves (which turn your opponent into a baby) and the Friendship moves (which humiliate your opponent by giving them a box of chocolates and two tickets to Cats). Coming in *Mortal*

## Just some of those hot characters

### Kitana

Kitana is the bad one of the twin girlies, which you can see by the fact that her nails are clearly stick-ons. Her motives for entering the tournament are somewhat suspicious. (What! – you mean she isn't competing for charity?)



### Liu Kang

MK2 goes all out for popularity with this Bruce Lee/Ryu/Russell Grant hybrid, who shrieks in a disturbing falsetto, both when he hits people and when people hit him. He's easy to use, and his fireball move is so quick and easy it's like having a revolver.



### Kung Lao

Blimey, it's Clint Eastwood. Everyone says it, so it must be.





(Right) That's not fair either... there's seven of him.

## Obscure special moves a-go-go

Among the many millions of special moves that these games always like to chuck at you, *MK2* has some that are distinctly obscure, and which only work in certain fighting areas. For example, in the Dead Pool, after winning the second round, if you press and hold the Low Punch and Low Kick buttons and – keeping them held down – perform a normal uppercut, your opponent gets an acid bath. Or try beating the crap out of someone as Shang Tsung while holding down Low Punch for 30 seconds (easy, eh?). Once they are on the way out, move one step away and release the button and he'll punch them in half. "Why?" you may ask. Because these are the things that keep socially maladjusted ten-year-olds happy. And the socially maladjusted, me, thankyougoodnight.)

**Kombat 3:** the Over-Familiarity moves. Get out the Anusol and the rubber gloves.

Then there are the secret bits, which are even more obscure. For example, there are three hidden characters: Jade, who is Kitana and Mileena combined; ten times as fast and immune to missile attacks (that seems fair). There's also Smoke, who sounds like one of the less-fit Gladiators, but is actually similar to Scorpion (only with a Hacking Cough move); and Noob Saibot (obviously they were running out of Chinese beers and had to move on to Thai starters) who could be an elaborate hoax for all I know. I've never seen the swine.

### More Kombat

These extra moves aside, it's essentially the same game again. There are four movement buttons, four attack buttons and a block button, which make playing it on the keyboard a little demanding at first. (I still prefer to block by pressing Away, like in *Street Fighter 2*.) The characters move quickly and smoothly, and overall it's another excellent conversion. It's just like the console version. You'd think it'd be better, actually, but then I suppose we should be pleased these things work at all – look what happened to the first *Street Fighter 2*.

One of the good things is that most of the fighters are reasonably evenly matched:

there's nobody who's five feet taller than anyone else, carrying a gun. (Shang Tsung's smaller, but since he can morph into any of the other characters, this doesn't really matter.) And where many beat 'em ups' "hitting noises" sound like a man with fat thighs wearing corduroy trousers, this one sounds like you're hitting someone. That Liu Kang makes some really wussy noises, though.

### Gripes

One of the less good things is that it's too easy to drain someone's power-bar with a flurry of punches, or repeated use of a missile attack – the fights just don't last long enough sometimes.

And the one thing that annoys me is that the game only waits a certain amount of time before going into the next fight, even if you haven't decided on your fighter. You just end up with whoever the selection box is over at the time.

### Other stuff

Last time they told us that two people couldn't play the keyboard at the same time, and we played quite happily until we read the manual; this time they tell us that the game can't be played straight from the CD-ROM, and we played it happily until we read that bit, and thought we had better install it. 27MB, though. The last version only needed 10MB. That's progress.

Basically, for playability and action, it's still the best straight beat 'em up on the PC. *Rise of the Robots*, for all the hype over the



graphics, was basically pretty weak as beat 'em ups go. You can't even jump over the other character, for heaven's sake.

The number of buttons and special moves used make playing this properly quite problematic – some of the moves simply don't work on a keyboard. And, of course, by the time you've shelled out for a twin-joystick port or a joystick port splitter, a couple of four-button control pads and the game, you could have bought a second hand SNES and any beat 'em up you fancy. But let's face it, if you're really that much into one-on-one beat 'em ups, you'd be far better off. There's a host of good ones on the SNES, including both versions of *Mortal Kombat*, three versions of *Street Fighter 2*, jokey stuff like the two *Clayfights*, and even fighting-with-sharp-implements jobbies like *Turtles Tournament Fighters* and *Samurai Shodown*. In fact, the absolute must-buy beat 'em up at the moment (for Lottery winners, anyway) is *Toshinden*, on the Play Station. But if you're not that bothered, you wouldn't mind a good beat 'em up for your PC and are even quite happy to use the keyboard, this game is definitely the one to have. **Z**



## SCORE

Another good conversion. And the best straight beat 'em up on the PC at the moment.

**Minimum Memory:** 4Mb RAM

**Minimum Processor:** 386/33

**Hard Disk Space Required:** 27Mb

**Graphics Modes Supported:** VGA

**Sound Cards Supported:** All major cards

**Controls:** Keyboard, 4-button joystick

**Price:** £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now

**Publisher:** Acclaim **Tel:** 0171 344 5000

## IN PERSPECTIVE

**S**adly there haven't been great beat 'em ups for the PC – just look at *Street Fighter 2* – so it's no surprise that *MK2* is now the King.

*Mortal Kombat 2*

*Mortal Kombat*

*Rise of the Robots*

*Street Fighter 2*



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# Iron Assault



The battle of the *MechWarrior* clones has begun. **Chris Anderson** takes a look at Virgin's attempt to cash in on the action.



WHEN ACTIVISION originally released *MechWarrior* it was the first PC game to give you a first-person perspective viewpoint from the cockpit of a Battle mech (which is a sort of large robot you sit inside and shoot people with). Activision has been working on a sequel for some time now but that won't arrive until June or July this year. In the meantime, however, Sierra have released *Earthsiege*, which has a spookily similar concept to *MechWarrior*, and now we find that Virgin are getting in on the act with *Iron Assault*.

The game is set 100 years in the future and stars you as a member of a resistance which has been set up to take on large corporations that are controlling the world. Throughout the game you are sent on various missions, and the more successful you are on each mission, the closer the resistance will be to ending the corporations' tyrannic rule.

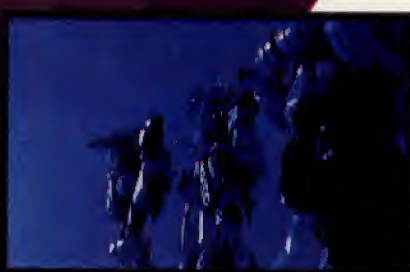
Most of the missions involve jumping into your unit (this is *Iron Assault's* equivalent to a Battlemech) and taking out pre-designated enemy units and strategic military targets, such as weapon depots and generators. Other missions involve capturing enemy pilots or rescuing some of your own. In later missions, providing you have been successful in the early ones, you get to take charge of your own soldiers and control their actions during the battles.

On the surface, *Iron Assault* looks like it offers an interesting blend of shoot 'em up action and strategy, but look a little deeper and you'll find that it never really gets off the ground for a number of reasons. Namely...

## Yawn city

*Iron Assault* is one of those games that looks a bit dull when you first play it, but gives big hints that it's going to get much better later on. For instance, you start the game with only two units at your disposal (a fast one with puny weapons and a slow one with marginally better ones), but if you complete missions successfully you are rewarded with bigger and better units as the game goes

(Right) A bit from the intro and an equally unimpressive cut-scene.







(Left) The unit selection screen. This Walker unit is a bit crap. By spooky coincidence, so are all the others.

(Below) An "action" sequence. Line up an enemy unit, fire your missile, and yawn as they explode in seriously unspectacular fashion.



on. The problem is that, although the better units are more effective in battle, they feel just the same to control as the weaker ones. You never get a new unit that makes you think "wow, this one is the business". They all lurch along at a painfully slow speed. They are all difficult to manoeuvre around corners. Admittedly, they all have different cockpits, but none of them have anything that you haven't seen in all the other ones. As far as the actual in-mission action is concerned, you might get a bit of a blast out of it for an hour or two (mostly to satisfy your curiosity as to whether it gets any better or not), but even with the varying mission types, you'll get bored stiff with the repetitive battles.

Basically, you can win most missions by using your weak missiles on the light enemy units, using your homing missiles on the medium units, and moving out of the way of enemy missiles every now and again. That's the major problem with the game out of the way of a game without much gameplay is a bit of a problem. I think you'll agree) but unfortunately, it gets even worse from here on. Problem number two...

### Ghastly graphics

The graphics in *Iron Assault* are annoying for two reasons. Firstly, they look pretty awful. The animation for the enemy units is pathetic - as they come walking towards you, they try and disorientate you by doing a peculiar *Monty Python*-esque walk to put you off.

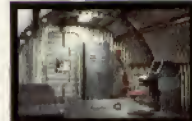
Also, as you go on various missions, you battle out with enemy units over different types of terrain, such as icy and desert scenarios etc., but they all look incredibly dull and uninspiring. The biggest problem with the graphics, however, is they actually get in the way of the gameplay. Although most of the missions take place outdoors, you sometimes have to go inside buildings to collect objects or people. The indoor graphics are so dark and fuzzy, it's sometimes impossible to see what it is you're supposed to be shooting at or picking up. So much for the visuals then, let's move on to problem number three...

### Fancy free

If there's one thing that can do wonders for the atmosphere in a futuristic shoot 'em up, it's over-the-top sound effects. The sounds of the explosions in *Iron Assault* when you blow up enemy units, however, are so twee, you sometimes wonder if you really are using state-of-the-art futuristic weaponry, or if, in fact, it's all a trick and you're actually using space-age pea-shooters instead. This may sound like a minor point but if you care to check out the sound effects in games like *Doom* (and even *Earthsiege* for that matter) you'll see just how much difference decent sound effects can make to a game.

So what have we got so far? It gets boring after an hour or two, it looks awful and the sound effects are crap. Oh dear, there surely must be something complimentary I can say about the game. Now let me see...

...Nope, there isn't. I played it for ages but that was only because I thought the strategy element would spice the game up and make it more involving in the later stages. It didn't. Oh well. If you really fancy having a go at a game of this type, check out *Earthsiege* (reviewed last issue). If you don't like the look of that, wait for *MechWarrior 2*, which really did look smart (previewed in August issue) and should be in the shops in June or July. **Z**



### IN PERSPECTIVE

**E**arthsiege is the obvious comparison to make here, but *Doom* is the undisputed king of first-person perspective shoot 'em ups, which gives me an incredibly feeble excuse to pop that in as well. Hurrah!

*Doom* and 2  
*Earthsiege*  
*Iron Assault*



(Left) These are your soldiers. They're all very keen but unfortunately, they're also a bit thick.

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### SCORE

*Iron Assault* promises a lot but, sadly, doesn't deliver.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb

Minimum Processor: 386DX

Hard Disk Space Required: 3Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: SoundBlaster and compatibles, AdLib

Controls: Mouse, joystick and keyboard

Price: £34.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Virgin Tel: 081 960 2255





# Flight Unlimited

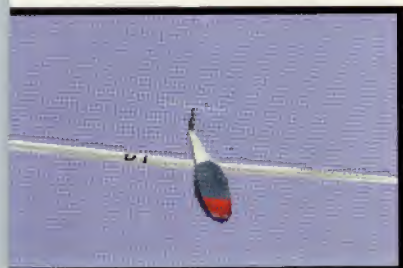
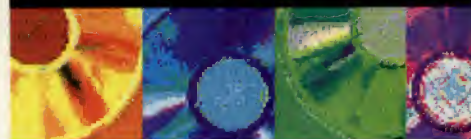
**PC**  
ZONE  
CLASSIC

When **Simon Bradley** said he'd been arresti'd, we had a whip round to raise bail. 22p later we found out he was talking about aerobatics and *Flight Unlimited*.

(Main picture) The glider is actually considerably more fun to fly around in than you'd expect



(Right) Hmm, I suppose the graphics are quite attractive really, aren't they? Obviously nothing special but, well, y' know, they're okay.



(Left to right) The variety of aircraft on offer is really quite superb, and what makes it even more impressive for the real propeller-heads is that the flight models all seem accurate.

**O**KAY, LET ME get this out of the way right at the beginning, before I even start to get carried away about aeroplanes and the wonders of flight...

If you are a normal person, with a normal PC, turn the page. Don't look at the pictures. Don't read about the flight model. It'll only upset you, because there is no way that your machine will handle this. None. Zip. So don't say I didn't warn you. If you do have the good fortune to be able to lay your hands on a truly ninja-esque PC with loads of RAM, then read on, Macduff.

### "Ooh" and "Aaarh!"

Okay, I'm a Technocrat. Tell me more. A couple of years ago I was at an air show. It was a trade day, so pretty well everyone was here on business. That meant that anoraks were outnumbered by suits, and that there were very few really sad folk with enormous cameras and bags covered in aeroplane stickers. One of the things about trade days is that people are always "talking shop". Even when the fly-ing displays are on - unless you're actually selling or buying the aircraft that is flying at the time - you are more than likely going to carry on trying to schmooze whoever it is you are with. Certainly, there is constant conversation unless there's too much noise.

Anyway, this funny little Russian aerobatic plane went up. Nobody took any notice. It turned on its smoke. Whoopee. No one looked twice. Then it went into an aerobatic routine. Now, I'm a pilot and so were the guys I was with. So were most of the people around us. None of us had seen anything like it. Ever. Conversation stopped and was replaced by "Oohs" and "Aaahs" like a firework display. 20,000 businessmen stopped doing deals and watched this nuttut doing things that are impossible. When he landed, there was a round of applause - something that has never happened before. Believe me, it was awesome. So good in fact that I went back the next day and video taped it. Come to the stand at the next show and I may let you see it. Why am I telling you this? Because the aeroplane involved was a Sukhoi SU-31, and you can fly one if you've got a Pentium and you buy *Flight Unlimited*. You also get to fly a Pitts Special, a Decathlon, an Extra or a Grob sailplane

### (In) stalling into a dive

Unusual aeroplanes and nothing to shoot at. Now I know that so far it sounds about as exciting as an add-on pack for *Flight Simulator 4*, but it gets better. Much better. So what do I get? The first thing you'll notice when you break into the shrink-wrapped package and stuff it into your CD drive is that the install program isn't especially user-friendly. It works, but it won't help you much. This bodes ill for the next bits, and as a result you go through the set-up and intro routines with more than a little trepidation. Have you made an incredibly terrible mistake?

Bursting through to the game itself, suddenly everything

becomes clear. Very clear. And, if you've set things up properly, it becomes very detailed, too...

...You are in a crew room. There are coffee stains on the carpet. If you go up to the chairs and look closely, you'll probably find ten pence down the side of one of the cushions. There are posters on the walls. Aeroplanes, of course. You can almost smell the AvGas and stale tobacco which you just know permeates the room. "Shit!" you think. "Why can't *Doom* look this good?"

The gentle buzz of piston engines mingles with the sound of the birds. You wander around (using the mouse), and notice that as you approach things they sort of highlight themselves. There are posters on the wall. There are books. There is a notice board. There is a table with model aeroplanes on it (it's uncannily just like my bedroom). And, as you approach the table, an aeroplane will start to rotate. Look to either side of it, and whichever plane you're looking at now will turn. Click the left mouse button, strap yourself in and go.

At the moment you actually start in the air, although when you get your grubby mitts on the game, you'll be able to take off.

Suddenly any thought you may have had about comparing this to *Flight Simulator 4* goes out of the window. You look around and are instantly sure that if you had the right maps you could fly home using the real world outside your plane. This is unbelievably good. Just look at the pics to see what I mean.

### Not just a pretty face

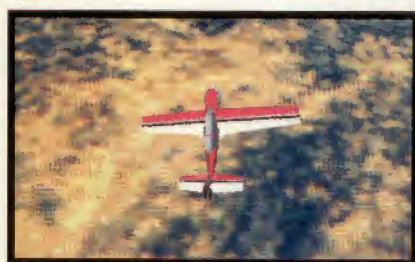
Is it just a pretty face? Now, we've all seen games that look great but have all the long-term attractiveness of herpes. We've seen games that look crappy, but which are really good to play. We've

(Below) Surprisingly, all three windows update at an alarming rate on a P-90 or above. What a surprise.





(Right and below) Gosh, wow, coo, ahh, umm, golly, look at that. They can't really be in-game graphics, can they? Surely not... they must be from a pre-rendered intro or something eh? Nope, they're not.



seen games which look crap and play even worse. But recently, we have seen a couple of games that do both, and do both well. Just a couple, mind. Well, I've got new one for you. *Flight Unlimited* kicks anything else so far into touch that the comparison bit at the end is gonna be bloody hard.

I never thought that I'd say it, but it really doesn't matter that you don't get to kill anything (although you can take part in some pretty scary low-level races). If you are in the least bit interested in flying for the sake of it, then this game will keep you grinning like an idiot for weeks. It flies right. It sounds right. It looks wonderful. I'm told that you could use this to reduce the number of hours you would need to get up to speed for a pilot's license. Normally my reply would be short and to the point. But this time I think it may actually be true. Are you getting my drift yet?

### Back to flight school

If we go back to the hut on the airfield (which, being American, they refer to as a "Fixed Operations Base" or "FBO"), we can wander around until we come to a notice board. We go to the notice that is marked "Lessons" and select it. All the menus, by the way, are presented like notes or icons. The whole thing just oozes atmosphere in exactly the way that most simulators of this genre don't.

Sorry, back to the plot. Select a lesson and we're presented with an animated whiteboard drawing which takes us through the manoeuvre diagrammatically. Just like you would get in the classroom at ground school.

Although this beta version didn't quite work right, the instructor

will be talking you through the whole way. You can watch the flying aircrafts as many times as you like and then go fly it yourself. Again, the reassuring voice of the instructor is there to help you avoid cocking it up completely.

A word about the instructor, here. Remember *Chuck Yeager*? Same comments no matter what actually happened? Okay, now forget it. *Flight Unlimited* seems to have used the resources most sims would use for running the enemy brains to run the instructor. In other words, he gives you advice that is relevant and helpful for the situation you're in right then. He'll shut up if you want, as well.

So anyway, on with the flight. You listen to what the instructor tells you, flying straight and level at 80 knots. The engine sounds fine and all your gauges are reading fine. You fix your eyes on the horizon and roll inverted. Keep the nose level until your wings are straight, then pull back to achieve 4-5G and keep pulling until you are almost level again. Watch your speed so as to avoid overstressing the aeroplane. Level off and perhaps convert some of your speed back to altitude. There... a perfect split-s.

Altogether there are 25 such manoeuvres available for you to learn, and the excellent flight recorder means that you can put together a full aerobatic display sequence, fly it and then bore your friends to death by getting them to watch it again and again. Actually, the first time they watch it, they will be so gobsmacked by the graphics that they'll probably want to see it again. In fact, if you're really sad, you could do an Aresti diagram (that's a system of squiggles which show aerobatic sequences), clip it to your screen and pretend that you're doing it for real.

### Planes, trainers and a real feel

Okay, let's talk about flight. I mentioned a whole bundle of aeroplanes, most of which you have probably never heard. The Su-31 is a brutish, little aerobatic monoplane and is what I saw at Farnborough. You've all seen a Pitts - you just may not have realised it. If you've ever been to an airshow anywhere you'll undoubtedly have seen someone chucking a tiny little biplane that sounds like a chainsaw all over the sky. Well, that's a Pitts.

It says a lot, by the way, that people now regard the Pitts as a trainer because it is soft. The Extra is like an American Su-31.

(Right) The virtual cockpit mode is extremely effective, and with a VR helmet the effect is staggering. This, like *Descent*, is a bona-fide VR chunder machine.

(Far right) Even the external side-view looks impressive. In fact, it all does. Let's stop all this superlative-laden captioning business right now.





### IN PERSPECTIVE

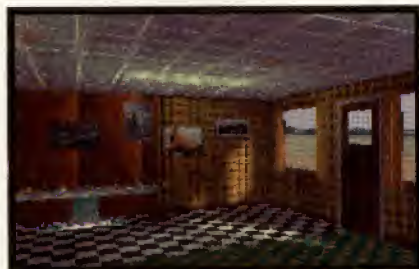
**B**loody hell. A flight sim that is actually more impressive and more realistic than FS4. Wow.

Flight Unlimited

Flight Simulator 4

ATP

US Navy Fighters



(Left) For chrissakes, even the bloody menus are impressive. It doesn't have simple options... oh no. No, here we have to have something that looks like Doom and you walk into rooms and stuff.

xcept that it's German. Then the Decathlon is a fairly sensible aerobatic trainer which looks like a normal plane.

Finally, the Grob is a glider. It's big and quiet and rather pretty and is "real flying". I've done some gliding and flown a Pitts once. Although that doesn't make me a world expert on the machines here, it at least gives me an idea. You know I said that they reckon you could learn to fly on this? I reckon they're right. Especially on the powered side of things. Everything is reflected here which you would expect to find in a real plane. Wind effects, propeller wash, thermals, torque reaction, the lot. This is bloody amazing. Sorry, no other words will do. Control reaction is fantastic - I just wish that Thrustmaster did a stick that reacted to control loads and got heavier and stiffer as you manoeuvred - and the whole thing is fluid and smooth in a way that I have never seen before.

### Real-life flight model

Although the graphics are great and the external views are fantastic, they are secondary to the excellence of the flight model. Apparently, the guys at Looking Glass have developed a system which actually treats air like a fluid (which, of course, it is) and makes it interact with the aeroplane in the right way. I know I've said that other sims fly right, and it's true that there are certainly others which are pretty good. But at the end of the day, regardless of how well they've coded the aircraft to behave, the air remains rather sterile and lifeless. Not any more, matey. You want to experience turbulence, ride thermals and the like? You got it. The only thing missing is the peculiar feeling as you flirt with the stall just before one wing drops. That's only because you can't feel the aircraft moving and your gut isn't being thrown around. The good thing about this, of course, is that you don't get bruised by the straps after a good session (Oooh-er) like you do in the real thing.

What was that about the graphics? Oh yes. Looking Glass took pictures of the areas they were interested in from two slightly different angles. By merging them, they got a 3D effect which they then translated onto a computer, mapped out and pixellated to get a terrific digital landscape which looks amazing - from a height, anyway. The aircraft themselves are exact copies of the real thing, and they look just so. So am I saying it's perfect? Well, no. Not quite. What I am saying is that it is pretty damn close to being perfect. The problem is that by being so clever it puts at least 80 per cent of potential buyers out of reach.

### Machine matters


Flight Unlimited uses more processing power to handle airflow dynamics alone than most simulators use to do everything. And that means you need a chip to match. I am assured that this will run on a DX2 with just 8MB RAM. I gotta say that I don't believe it. If it worked, the detail levels would have to be at minimum, and that would be a real shame.

So what do you really need? Okay, to get the best out of this, I

reckon you need a P/66 minimum with 16MB RAM and a really quick video card, such as a 2MB Kelvin. The bigger the monitor the better. You need the best CD-ROM that you can get, with a fast interface to minimise access times. You also want a good 16-bit stereo sound card. Finally, you need a full set of Thrustmaster gear (including rudder pedals), headphones for sound (more atmospheric), a nice,

comfortable chair, a darkened room, an under-standing spouse/group of friends/dog and loads of spare time.

Would I buy it? The 64 million dollar question. Yes, I definitely would. I'd also recommend it to my friends, provided they had the kit to use it. Trouble is, though, if you enjoy flying for the sake of it, there isn't much about. Sure, you

can set up most combat sims for free flight with no enemy, but that's a pretty empty experience because it isn't what the game was meant for. Then there are what I would call the "anorak simulators", like FS 4 and ATP. You can tell they're dull because they have such racy titles. These games are fine if you really want to fly a Learjet from Oakland to St Louis using radio navigation aids, or if you want to practice landing an Airbus at JFK. All very worthy but a bit limited graphically (though FS4 isn't bad), and they still don't have realistic air (like a cockney Action Man). But yes. Not only would I buy it, but I'd say it makes it worth buying that new machine. Then you can really fly in this, and when you've got good you can go kill things with US Navy Fighters. Excellent! 

**"Although the graphics are great... they are secondary to the excellence of the flight model."**



## SCORE

**Sorry, but this is the best. Simple as that.**

**Minimum Memory:** 8Mb (much more recommended, though)

**Minimum Processor:** 486 DX2/66 (P-90 or P-100 recommended)

**Graphics Modes Supported:** VGA, SVGA

**Sound Cards Supported:** All SoundBlaster types and compatibles

**Controls:** Keyboard, joystick, mouse, Thrustmaster FCS

**Price:** £49.99 **Release Date:** Out now

**Publisher:** Virgin Interactive **Tel:** 0181 960 2255



# HERETIC

**Charlie Brooker** has had enough. Yep, he told us that if he had to play another inferior *Doom*-style game he'd go off his trolley once and for all. We fancied a bit of entertainment, so...



WE'VE HAD *Doom*. We've had countless PWAD additions to *Doom* (ranging from entire 30-level missions featuring *Alien* graphics, to sample-changers that

replace the usual roars, grunts and groans with "humorous" noises or out-and-out profanity). We've had cheats and hacks for *Doom*, which turbo-charge the weapons and make Imps explode like barrels. We've had sub-standard rip-offs of the format (*Corridor 7*, *Rise of the Triad*, etc.) and rip-offs which try to inject a new element to the tried-and-

tested gameplay (*Doom* on wheels in *Quarantine*, *Doom* in teeny-weeny spaceships in *Descent*). Now here comes another retread - *Doom* meets J.R.R. Tolkien (and bites his head off and gargles the blood). Excited? Probably not.

Still, at least this one has "Official Rip-Off" stamped all over it - after all, it's been developed by RavenSoft in collaboration with *Doom*'s original creator, id itself. And rather than being a quick 'n' easy rehash of the game we all know and love, it contains some new features: the ability to look up and down, fly, and store spells and objects in an inventory for later use. Oh yes - all the weapons have two modes of use: Normal mode, in which they are fairly deadly; and Powered-up mode, in which they become as deadly as the kind of weapon some "very large countries" likes to use against small, barely-armed nations. (Press a button and watch the internal organs fly like a startled flock of crows.)

The first nine levels of *Heretic* are available to all and sundry as shareware (check

## Turn on, tune in and tool up

Here's all the things you'll be pointing at in *Heretic*-land:

### Phoenix Rod

Ludicrously ornate and therefore not at all scary. I mean, honestly. For God's sake. They had far scarier weapons on *Dr Who*, and those were notoriously bad. Shoots fireballs - and in Testosterone mode - it turns into a fully-fledged flamethrower.



### Staff

Great. A stick. This is my favourite weapon in the game. It's the most useless, obviously, but there's something inherently comic about flailing around with a big stick, so I like it. Power it up and it glows and crackles a bit and hurts more.



### Elven Wand

Okay, I know it's *supposed* to be a bit of a weedy weapon, but come on. A magic wand? What next? Barons of Hell in tutus? When it's powered-up it fires a few more girly stars than usual. A bore.



### Gauntlets

"You need hands to show the world you care," I think is how the song went. Well, these hands don't care. No, they fry you to death. Do not, repeat DO NOT forget to remove these gauntlets before visiting the lavatory. Power-up mode lets you suck the life out of the monsters.



### Dragon's Claw

Stupid-looking device, which reminded me of the tools Jeremy Irons invented in *Dead Ringers*. Fires rapid bursts of blue light - it'd look great in a club with some dry ice floating around it. In Super mode each pulse shatters on impact, sending a load of spiky ball bearings whizzing into foreheads left, right and centre. As seen on BBC TV's *Watchdog*.

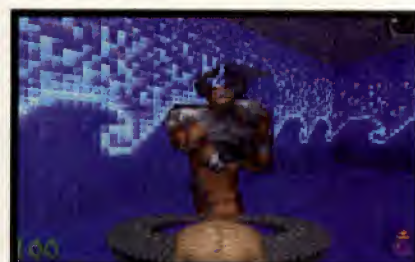


### Hellstaff

A ram's head on a stick. It spits out nasty bursts of red fiery stuff, but the best thing about it - and this is my second favourite weapon - is the fact that once it's revved up into Wow mode, it shoots out a big burst of magic and causes a downpour of deadly acid rain, right over the monster's heads. Cool. And hey! Just think! It could happen to us, for real, in our own lifetime. Isn't pollution marvellous?

### Ethereal Crossbow

Could've been scary, but isn't. Very effective at close range, however, allowing you to sit back and admire the graceful arc described in the air by a chunk of Golem's shoulder flying over your head. Power it up and it kills more things at once. Quelle surprise.





(Right) Great, big, monster thingy coming your way? Have no fear, just frazzle it with your magical "electro beam" gauntlets.



out last issue's cover CD for your copy – and if you haven't got a CD drive yet, then, er, tough). The one I'm dissecting with my special critic's scalpel (and by that I don't mean a knife 'specially designed for slicing up the smug, polo-necked tosspots on *The Late Show*, although the mere thought of that brings a blissful smile to my face) is the full registered version – the "proper" one, if you will, featuring a full 27 levels of ancient magic and exploding ribcages. Furthermore, it's got a few extra weapons, spells and monsters, too. Unlike its free-and-easy shareware incarnation, the full version will cost you about £30 to £40.

So, is it worth it...?

### See you later, terminator

The very first thing that struck me about *Heretic* was how ornate most of the weapons are. *Doom* was jam-packed full of macho, high-tech killware, which made you feel like a big, tough, soldier guy; the sort of man who can smoke a cigar down to the butt while machine-gunning entire squad-



rons of axe-wielding, wild-eyed lunatics, without spilling ash all down his front. Go on, admit it. You can harp on as much as you like about how you played *Doom* to death because it was a technical marvel, or had wonderful gameplay, but really, deep down, one of the main reasons it kept you hooked was because, when you had just cleared a room full of teeming nasties and stood about in the resultant carnage surveying the damage, you felt a bit "tough". For the first time in your whole, weedy life, you were a Hard Man. Remember how you could never catch the ball properly during cricket lessons at school – you were scared because it "stung your hands"? Ha! Never again. You ran around for a bit, firing phallic symbols (just look at where he holds the rocket launcher) at a few nasties and, all of a sudden, your wuss days were over – until, that is, you switched the PC off, went to sleep and had horrid, scary nightmares, which made you go pee-pee in your Rupert the Bear jim-jams. Sad sad sad.

Anyway, assuming you're still reading after that monolithic ramble, the point I'm taking the scenic route to make is this: the weapons in *Heretic* are wimpy. They kill things and rip the monsters apart, sure. But they're all silly, "wizardy" weapons;



(Below) When you're out numbered, even the odds a bit with the magic skull. This will increase the power of your arms, in this case, sending out two arrows instead of a measly one.



balls of mystic energy fired from ornate sticks. Even the crossbow, which I had high hopes for (envisaging Golems thrashing hopelessly around before me with huge steel bolts jutting out of their foreheads – the kind of thing that turns me on), fires nothing scarier than "ethereal arrows" i.e. flashes of light. Boo. I just didn't like it. It made me feel like a cheat. They sound stupid as well. So there.

### Clucking hell

Okay, so the new weapons are a bit lame. What about the other new features? Do they improve upon *Doom*'s gameplay? Well, not really. Being able to look up and down is all very well, but you can only look up or down an extra 45 degrees – it's rather like having your neck in plaster – and it only

(Below left) Was once a crappy old staff, BUT power it up and its transformed into a, er, glowing old staff.

(Below) See this monsty? It sends whirlwinds AND fireballs – nasty!





(Right) These little sods may not be that tough (although they throw fire balls on later levels) but there's bloody loads of them, so watch out!



$$\text{Worthiness} = \frac{x + y}{z}$$

The result? It's a glorified PWAD. It's nothing really new. Fun for a while, definitely, but compared to some of the other Doom-inspired games I've seen recently (*Descent* and *Dark Forces* spring to mind), it's a little stale. My advice is this: try out the shareware version first. If you love it and want to try out the new weapons and spells, then register and get the full package. Just don't expect *Doom 3*.

And as for this score, well, it's my personal opinion, reflecting my disappointment. *Heretic* didn't "grab" me. I'm not itching to play it again. Am I wrong? I don't think so.

Maybe, just maybe, I'm getting bored of plain old *Doom*. Now that makes me a heretic. ☒

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## SCORE

**Not as good as *Doom 1* or *2*. Still fun, but I'd rather wait for *Quake*, thanks.**

**Minimum Memory:** 4Mb RAM  
**Minimum Processor:** 286 16MHz (386 33MHz recommended)  
**Hard Disk Space Required:** 9Mb  
**Graphics Modes Supported:** VGA  
**Sound Cards Supported:** AdLib, SoundBlaster  
**Controls:** Keyboard, mouse

**Price:** £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now  
**Publisher:** iD/Raven **Tel:** No UK tel. number

leads to confusion anyway, as you find yourself running about, staring up at the sky while being attacked by a Golem who has craftily sneaked up on you whilst out of your field of vision. Basically, unless you're flying, it's pointless.

And speaking of the ability to fly, that's a bit of a con as well. It's more like having the ability to hover. I was hoping that once I'd taken to the skies, the sensation of movement would be a bit like real flight – banking left and right, swooping up and down, etc. Instead, it's more like sitting on the front of a forklift truck, rising upwards and downwards, moving forwards and backwards, and yet never really feeling like you've left the ground.

Having an inventory, however, really is an improvement. Now you can store up those Medikits and Light Amplifiers (very sorry, "Purple Flasks" and "Torches") and use them when you need them. Furthermore, you can collect some handy spells, hold on to them until you've nearly forgotten about them, and then use

them on the bad guys (or if you're playing head-to-head, your bestest buddy) at the last minute when they least expect it. The

"Morph Ovum" spell is particularly rib-tickling; temporarily transforming your foe into an indignant-looking chicken that will peck at you in a desperate manner until you blast it into a snowstorm of feathers – excellent fun in Multi-player mode, where that phrase "I feel like Chicken Tonight" takes on an unexpectedly literal meaning.

Other additions include: flowing water and slippery ice (which, if you ask me, are

more of a pain in the arse than an improvement); exploding volcanoes (small ones, thankfully); and a few extra effects, such as the splash of water that appears when you jump in a river, or the smoky trails left behind by incoming fireballs.

Despite these little tweaks and twiddles, however, the song remains pretty much the same. It's still *Doom*, albeit *Doom* with a topping of grated *Tolkien* and a few extra buttons to remember. Worst of all, though, the levels aren't laid out as well as iD's original *Doom* episodes – there's a lot more running around in confusion and a lot less lurking horror.

### For maths get smashed

Let's do some maths now, shall we. Don't be afraid. Maths is fun. No, really. Look, if you're not convinced, then imagine that I'm Carol Vorderman in a catsuit/a young Jonathan Miller in a thong (delete where applicable according to your own gender/preferences/wanton desires). First of all, let us define some integers.

("Yeah, let's!" – Readers.)

Let us assume that:

$x$  = *Doom*'s inherent playability (running, shooting, panicking, network play).

$y$  = *Heretic*'s bona-fide

improvements upon this playability (the inventory, power-ups and the trick with the chicken).

$z$  = *Heretic*'s distinct disadvantages when placed alongside *Doom* (un-scary monsters, inferior level design, references to "Runes" and "Wizards").

There. That didn't hurt. Now, to work out *Heretic*'s overall "worthiness", all we have to do is use this simple equation:

**"And speaking of the ability to fly... It's more like having the ability to hover."**





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(Right) These things are the scariest monsties of any game... ever. They're big, green and make this seriously disturbing, metallic, scrapey-scrapey noise that would give anyone the heebie-geebees.



**PC  
ZONE  
CLASSIC**

# DESCENT

**It's not often you find a game that could actually make you feel sick. We handed the sick bag to Charlie Brooker and locked him in a darkened room.**

**H**OW AM I going to explain this game to you? It's a tricky one. If I were David Cronenberg, I'd probably ask you to imagine for a moment that video games are people and that *Doom* is a woman. A pregnant woman come to that – and what's more, she's been artificially inseminated. Except they had a little accident down at the sperm bank. Someone was absent-mindedly hurling an immense granite boulder around (as you do) and it flew into a shelf full of specimen jars and shattered the lot, leaving the contents in a huge, swirling, bubbling pool on the floor. What a mess. The collected fluids of *Tie Fighter*, *System Shock*, *Tempest*, *Microcosm*, and *Magic Carpet* – the cream of PC gaming – mixed together as one.

Anyway, the upshot of it all is that nine

months later Ms. *Doom* gives birth to a very unusual baby indeed, and that baby is called... *Descent*.

Except that I'm not David Cronenberg at all, so instead, I'll simply describe it as "360° *HoverDoom*".

## Cidicide

The plot: The Wurzels have taken over a series of underground space mines, sometime in the distant future. They are constructing death rays and bloody big bombs and threatening Earth a bit. They're also reconstructing all the mining robots that they can find and turning them into horrid combat droids. Enter you (yes, YOU) as the only man,

woman, or child who can stop them.

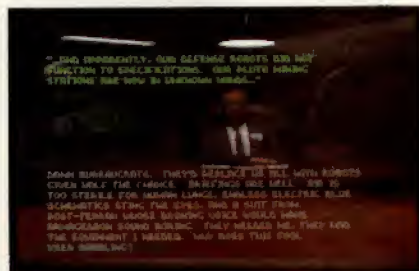
Climbing into your nifty, highly manoeuvrable attack vessel, you blast off into space, hoping to penetrate each mine in turn, rescue any humans left inside, and finally blow up the fusion reactor which lies at every core, destroying any Wurzel-tainted nastiness that lurks within in the process. Once the reactor blows however, you have a brief 45-second countdown in which to find the exit and escape the mine before it all explodes around you. Fail, and the entire human race is doomed to spend the rest of its short existence listening to sub-standard novelty pop sung in an "amusing" rural accent.

**"The collected fluids of Tie Fighter, System Shock, Tempest, Microcosm, and Magic Carpet..."**



(Below) Your big space-base thing looms as only a spacebase can.

(Below right) Your boss represents you with your riffs. They're silk and have big red hearts on them - phoorrrh!



Alright then, it isn't *The Wurzels*. It's *Aliens*. Again. Anyway, enough about the plot. Let's move on to how it looks, sounds and moves.

## The complete indoor pilot

Although from the screenshots, lovingly reproduced here, *Descent* may appear highly similar to *Doom* (albeit pointing at funny angles), it actually moves more like *System Shock* (but faster), and handles more like *Magic Carpet* (with greater freedom). The playing area is assembled from texture-mapped polygons, as, indeed, are the nasties. You have total freedom of movement and astounding manoeuvrability. Your craft can bank left and right, spin through all the angles that a spinning thing possibly can, hover in mid-air, loop the loop, zip forwards or zoom backwards, and even "strafe" in any angle you care to mention. As you can imagine, this causes problems during your first couple of attempts; they'll consist largely of you swearing loudly and wrestling with the controls as you spin around and around, bouncing off walls and reversing into enemies. There are an awful lot of buttons to remember, whether you're using a joystick, mouse or keyboard (it is a kind of flight sim after all) and it's learning to cope with both these and the dynamics

of ultra-manoeuverable flight that can cause a little consternation. It's well worth going through this period of frustration however, since the feeling of satisfaction that you get when you pull off your first successful flashy manoeuvre is fantastic.

Once you've grasped the basics you'll be able to come to terms with the next problem; getting your bearings. Most of us aren't used to flying upside-down through our living rooms, and so it's easy to become confused about just where you are while playing *Descent*. The map simply serves to add insult to injury; revealing in rotatable wireframe 3D just how dauntingly complex your environment is. It's like a freeze-frame image of a plate of spaghetti and meatballs falling from a window-ledge, turned into a 3D model, with your ship somewhere in the middle. You'll feel as lost as Bonnie Tyler did when she sang *Lost in France*. You'll be more lost than the family from *Lost in Space*. You will be the lostliest of them all.

But actually, that's all part of the fun.

## How to kill from any angle

Hardly a fair fight, now is it? Probing the bowels of a warren-like mine filled to the brim with all manner of life-threatening machinery all on your own. And all you've got are two measly lasers and a back pocket



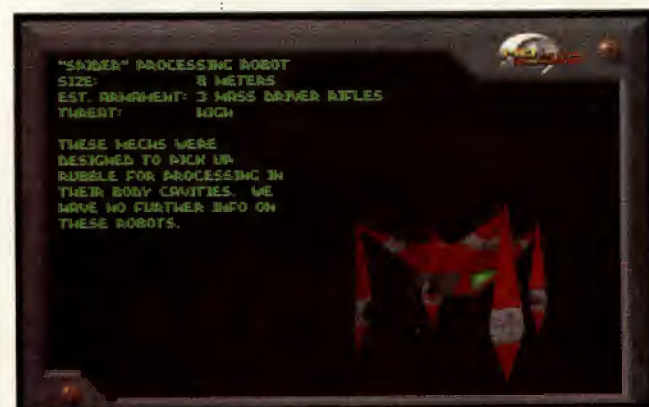
full of concussion missiles. It's like a boxing match where one contestant has a horse-shoe in his glove, and the other is tied to a chair. Boo hoo hoo.

Fortunately, it seems that the technological warfare equivalent of the Easter bunny has been burrowing through these mines, leaving a scattered collection of weaponry upgrades and other assorted kill-ware in its wake.

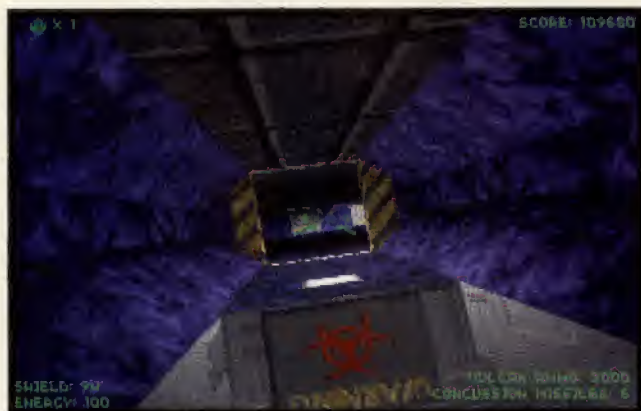
There's a veritable selection box of mouth-watering maim-stuff on offer here - vulcan cannons, homing missiles, plasma guns, cloaking devices, even floating mines. But don't go crazy or anything. It's best to save up as much ammo as you can, because if you find yourself in short supply at a crucial moment, you'll be nothing more than mere debris before you can say "knife" (those with stutters, excepted).

(Below) Scary monsties require big guns with which to kill them, and there are loads of big guns knocking around.

(Below left) Looking not unlike an accident with a large pile of spaghetti, the level map is a full 3D, turny-roundy thing that looks dead complicated whichever way you look at it.







(Above) Looking out of the back window is always handy. The big, nasty, green monsties have a habit of trying to zap you from behind.

(Top) In full-screen mode Descent has an un-nerving ability to make you feel sick.

When you die, all the weapons you have collected remain in the location where you were killed, and if you've got any lives left you'll have to find your way back there before you can use them again. Save your game frequently or you'll end up getting rather browned off.

Remember that nail-biting, knee-knocking sensation you got every time you peered round a darkened corner in *Doom*? Well, because "they" could be lurking anywhere, prepare to experience that feeling all over again, except that this time you'll be afraid of not just the darkened corners, but also of the ominous hole in the ceiling, the mysterious curved tunnel leading off to the left, and the brightly lit gap in the top left corner of the room. And don't forget to look down every now and again in case you pass unwittingly over the scary, little opening below which houses a particularly shirty shredding droid.

Surprisingly, for such a claustrophobic environment, you couldn't feel more exposed if you were being flayed alive. I was playing the game on "Rookie" level and I still found myself relying heavily on save-games for progress.

### Killing, Hannibal Lecter style

The gameplay might not be to everybody's taste. It *sounds* like a 200mph roller coaster ride through twisting, cavernous insanity. But it's actually a little more methodical – you can't just flash about at breakneck speed, blasting anything that gets in your way, because there's too many of them. They'll simply overwhelm you. Instead, you learn to try and pick them off one by one, although there's still many an occasion when you'll have to come over all Hannibal

## IN PERSPECTIVE

**H**ow tough can it be? *Descent* is bloody good, but then so is *Dark Forces*...and I suppose *Doom* is still the king. It's VERY close though.

**Descent**

**Dark Forces**

**Heretic**

**Doom I & II**

Lecter and butcher entire squadrons of the things in a maniacal whirling rage.

Sometimes it's like a game of peek-a-boo and sometimes you'll be holding epic dog-fights in the corridor. It's not a simple game to handle, but it's a bloody good one.

### Cavalcade of options

One of the many factors that has contributed to *Doom*'s seemingly endless reign as the most popular and widespread PC game of all time is its *tweakability*. It was endlessly fiddled about with by HackMasters' everywhere. *Descent* will no doubt be subject to the same kind of meddling; in fact, it seems to have been designed to be meddled with, with a range of neat little options, such as the ability to record your own demos or take a snapshot.

As is becoming *de rigueur* in these network-obsessed times, *Descent* also features a top-notch, link-up multi-player mode. Up to eight players can compete against each other in a frenzied fight to the very death, or come over all happy and smiley and play co-operatively against the Wurzel menace instead. Guaranteed fun, basically. You can even input a range of taunts and insults and assign them to specific "hotkeys" so you can tell the opponent chasing you just exactly how bad his or her mother smells without having to pause a moment to type the whole message in – a nice, thoughtful touch, and one that speaks volumes about the general demeanour of games players.



Oh – and those of you with slightly "under-endowed" computers can fiddle about with a full range of detail settings in order to keep things running smoothly. Hallelujah.

### I'm going to torture you anyway

Now, let's assume for a moment that I've just been taped to a chair by Mr. Blonde from *Reservoir Dogs*. He's waving a razor and a great big yam in front of me and threatening to turn it into a giant Mr. Potato Head – using my nose, eyes, ears, hair and teeth – unless I slag *Descent* off for a moment. He rips the tape from my mouth and allows me to speak:

I say it's a little repetitive. I say it's hard to get to grips with. I say it slows down badly when there's lots of things around. I even say that the difficulty level is set a little too high. And no, I say, shaking my head, it isn't better than *Doom*.

But, as soon as Mr. Orange has blown Mr. Blonde's brains out and saved me, I get up off the chair and say that none of these niggles have prevented me from coming back to *Descent* time and time again since I started playing it – more than, say, *Magic Carpet*. It's got that elusive "grip" factor which ensures a game's longevity. I'll play it through to the bitter end.

Really good action games are few and far between. But this is one of the few. **Z**



## SCORE

**This is a diamond mine. So dig it.**

**Minimum Memory:** 4Mb RAM (8Mb recommended)

**Minimum Processor:** 386 33 or faster (486+ recommended)

**Hard Disk Space Required:** 16Mb

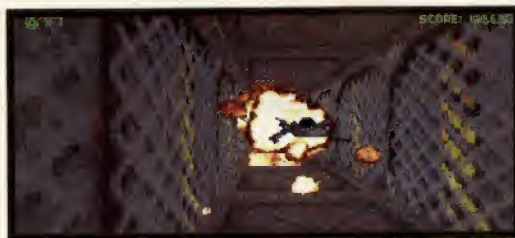
**Graphics Modes Supported:** VGA

**Sound Cards Supported:** All major cards

**Controls:** Mouse or joystick recommended. Also supports Thrustmaster, Gravis Phoenix and the Logitech Cyberman. And if you've got a VFX or CyberMaxx VR Headset you can use that too – show-off.

**Price:** £44.99 **Release Date:** March  
**Publisher:** Interplay **Tel:** 0235 821666





(Above) Bang, bang, bang. Bang... er, bang.

# Getting Shafted with David Hasselhoff

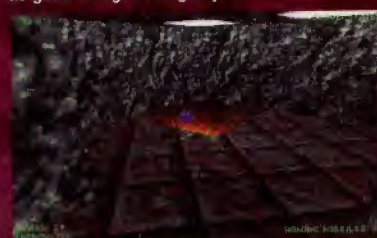
The story so far: Our hero, played by David Hasselhoff, has lovingly annihilated almost everything to be found in a particularly convoluted mine. We join him as he approaches a mysterious yellow door...



**1** Knock Knock. Who's There? David. David Who? David Hasselhoff. Laugh or I'll get my people to sue your ass.



**2** So, you wanna play, huh? Just you go ahead and try it, buster. I take it like a man and give as good as I get. Allegedly.



**3** Those guys were a piece of cake. (Checks reflection in mirror and smiles at self.) You're the greatest. Aha, an energy booster.



**4** Jesus! Where did they come from? Get my agent on the phone! Hello?



**5** I "cannot open this door"? BUT I'M DAVID HASSELHOFF, GODDAMMIT! I'LL SUE YOUR ASS! Oh. I see. It's the exit that only opens once I've knocked out the reactor. Better remember where it is.



**6** Hey asshole! This is my tunnel! Well, come on then, tough guy. You and whose army?



**7** \$%\*&! £&"%\$SE%!!! (Fills trousers).



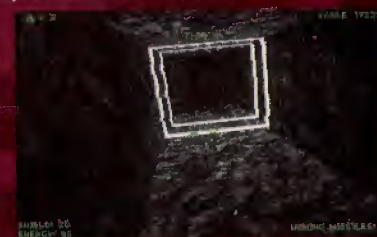
**8** An invincibility booster. Not that I need one — I'm an American, fer chrissakes.



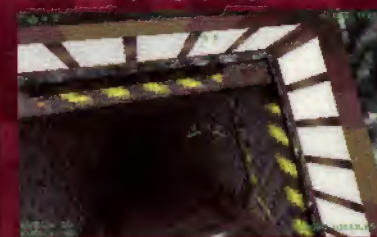
**9** Actually, I am quite glad I found that power up, now that I come to think of it.



**10** Well, well, well... the main reactor. Let's see you react against an all-American hail of gunfire, ya red bastard! Hasta la vista baby! I'll see you in hell! Eat this! (etc.)

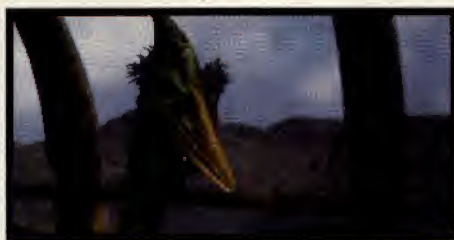
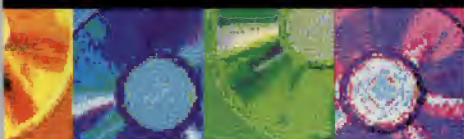


**11** Ohgodjesusgod let me get out of here before it blows up. Ohgodjesusgodchristjesus.



**12** Yahoo! Made it! I am fantastic! I am the most almighty being to ever walk the Earth! I AM DAVID GODDAMNED HASSELHOFF!





(Left) Crikey, a talking vulture, er sorry, dinosaur.

**Chris Anderson** takes a look at Cryo's latest adventure game and discovers you don't have to be French to be weird, but it helps.

# Lost Eden



AYBE IT'S JUST ME, but I find it a little hard to identify with talking dinosaurs, particularly if they look like whoever drew them couldn't make up their minds whether to draw them as dinosaurs or something from outer space. Unfortunately, it is creatures such as these that you will have to get used to for the duration of *Lost Eden*. You can get round this disorientating state of affairs, though, and thus enhance your enjoyment of the game, by simply pretending that they're not really dinosaurs at all, but weird talking things, "weird" being the operative word. Er, sorry, that was just my little contribution to the "are French games weird, or what?" debate, which has been going on in the pages of *PC Zone* for the last few months. As far as I'm concerned, the answer is an emphatic "Yes". As far as the game itself is concerned, Cryo are more or less continuing from where they left off with *DragonLore*, in the sense that the whole game experience relies very heavily on the story behind it. To get the maximum enjoyment out of *Lost Eden*, you really have to understand what it's all about. Here then, is the tale.

## Once upon a time...

You take the role of Prince Adam, a young Prince who has just come of age. Your home is the Citadel of Mo, a huge fortress where you live with your father, the King. In this ancient land, humans and dinosaurs co-exist uneasily, each race wary of the other. There was a time when dinosaurs and humans would build citadels together in which to live that would serve as a defence against the evil Tyrann race, led by the wicked dinosaur Moorkus Rex. All this changed when your grandfather, affectionately known as the Enslaver, tore down the citadels leaving the inhabitants of the land vulnerable to the evil Tyranns. I guess he didn't like the colour of them or something. The only way to bring peace back to the land is by persuading the humans and dinosaurs to work together again and build new citadels to live in, so that they can once more defend themselves against the Tyrann hordes. To achieve this, you must leave your cosy citadel and travel the valleys outside, merrily building

**"This is the first 'interactive movie' type game that I found entertaining simply by watching it..."**



citadels in each valley as you go along. Then, you will have to tackle the evil Moorkus Rex himself and rid the land of his tyranny forever and ever.

If you think all this citadel building and negotiating with dinosaurs sounds like a tall order, worry not, it isn't. Let me explain...

## Take my hand

*Lost Eden* is not an adventure game, at least it isn't by conventional standards. Right from the start you are led by the hand from one location to another and you will always find someone to tell you what to do next. Not that you will have very much to do anyway. Most of your time in the game is spent listening to what the characters have to say about the particular situation you are in. You never feel the satisfaction of solving a particularly tricky puzzle, consequently to be rewarded with a new location or new part of the game.

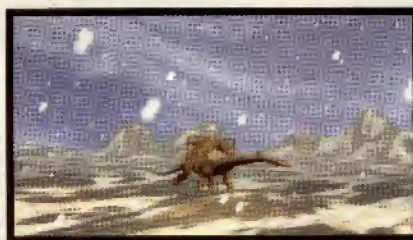
You are always carried along by the game and taken where it wants you to go instead of the other way around. Interacting with the characters is pretty much the same story. You have no control over what you say to them. You just click on them and if they have any information to impart which may be useful, they'll tell you. So, player involvement is definitely not *Lost Eden's* strongest point.

(Right) This is Dina. If you think she looks weird, just wait 'till you hear her speak.





(Right and Below)  
Graphically, Lost Eden  
has no equals. Here are  
just a few of the many  
cut-scenes in the game.



There are times when it threatens to pick up a bit, though. When you leave your home citadel and enter the valleys, you have to learn how to build the citadels and strengthen them in stages. Here's the low-down on what you'll be doing for a considerable portion of the game: building citadels.

### Here's one I made earlier

In each valley you will find dinosaurs and humans. You cannot build a citadel without the co-operation of both. Often the humans in a valley will give you a quest that you have to complete before they will co-operate. On completion of the quest, there are two steps you need to take to build a citadel. Firstly, there are different types of dinosaurs in the valleys. The first ones you need to see are the Brontosaurus. If you give them the correct item, and summon their assistance in the correct way, they will build a modest citadel which will keep the Tyrannns at bay for a short time. To turn your modest citadel into a powerful fortress, you need the help of the Triceratops. They also need a gift, as well as some verbal encouragement (you have to sing to them) before they will help but once they do, your citadel will be almost impenetrable. Your final task in the

valley is to slow down the progress of the Tyrannn hordes. To do this you need to get the aid of the warrior dinosaurs. They also need a gift and a special item before they will co-operate. Once you've got them to help, they will fight the Tyrannns and stop them from over-running the valley. And so it goes on. You go to each valley and do the same thing all over again. Pacify the humans, get the Bronto-

## A brief history

Cryo first came to the attention of the PC games world with Dune, widely regarded as a classic strategy adventure. They went a bit downhill after that with KGB – an incredibly boring adventure game with far too many Russians in it. No one was more surprised than us when they popped up out of nowhere with Commander Blood – a spectacularly weird adventure game that seemed to be designed purely to confuse the hell out of whoever played it. In the absence of any real gameplay, it was promptly regarded (somewhat generously, some would say) by certain sectors of the press as a "work of art". This was followed by the comparatively normal DragonLore – a superb adventure game with glorious graphics. (Quick quiz: which half of the previous sentence does not apply to Lost Eden?) In many ways, the storytelling in Lost Eden is very similar in style to that of Dune. It seems ironic that the strategic building element in Dune is exactly what could have saved Lost Eden. The citadel building in the game is definitely a lost opportunity – to have incorporated a strategic element which would have made the rest of the game so much more interesting. Shame.



(Above) It's a bit difficult to take the King seriously. I mean, look at that beard for a start.

(Left) Weirdsville!!!!



## IN PERSPECTIVE

**D**ragonLore combines great graphics with reasonable gameplay. *Lost Eden* combines great graphics with more great graphics. *Hell* combines falling asleep with playing computer games.

DragonLore

Lost Eden

Hell

(Right) No adventure game would be complete without a token chick for a bit of romantic canoeing.



saurus to build a citadel, get the Triceratops to make it bigger, and get the warriors to fight the Tyranns. There is no real challenge in any of this, and it soon becomes very repetitive. There aren't really any puzzles to solve. You find out what you need to do more by trial and error than through creative thinking. There's even a shell you can use on yourself, which calls the spirit of an old dinosaur who tells you what you need to do next. So, as an adventure game, *Lost Eden* is a waste of time. Virgin say it's aimed at children and beginners (this is PR-speak for "there aren't any puzzles in it"). I can see how children would find it entertaining, but even novice adventurers will find no challenge in this game whatsoever. There are, however, a few points in the game's favour that make up to a very large extent for the lack of gameplay. First and foremost, there are the graphics...

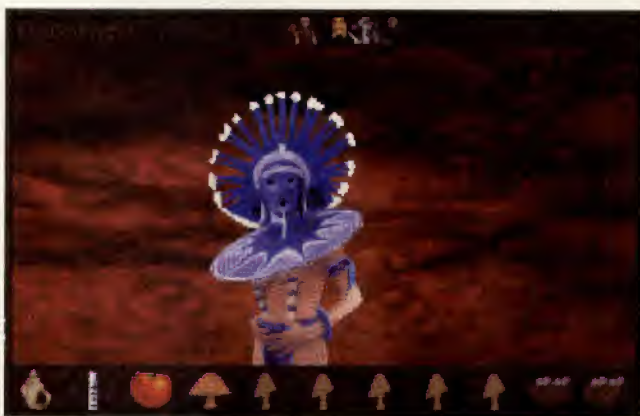
### Verily, a thing of beauty

*Lost Eden* is a work of breathtaking beauty. There is currently no PC adventure around as graphically impressive as this one. You can

obviously see for yourself by looking at the screen shots that the Silicon Graphic landscapes are beautifully drawn, but the real eye-openers in the game are the cut-scenes. If you've seen the intro to *Magic Carpet* you'll know what I'm talking about. The difference with *Lost Eden* is that the fun doesn't stop at the intro. Every time you move from one location to another, you are treated to a spectacular animation depicting your journey. Huge dinosaurs negotiating beautifully drawn terrain, awesome Pterodactyls soaring gracefully through the air, incredible views

of your giant fortress as the dinosaurs build it up

— almost every major thing you do sparks off a truly impressive animation. Okay, so wonderful graphics don't make up for lack of entertainment, but if the game itself doesn't grab you, the chances are the story-line will. The story is superbly told from start to finish, with each section of the plot linking up neatly with the next. I still wanted to finish the game despite the lack of a challenge just so that I could see how the story ended. This is the first "interactive movie" type game that I found entertaining simply by watching it and getting involved in the plot. You, of course, may feel differently. If you're looking for a challenging adventure, this most definitely is not it. If you appreciate superb story-telling, supported by awesome graphics, you may get a couple of days entertainment out of this product, but that's as far as it goes. The choice is yours. **Z**



(Left) Er, what are you doing with that plate around your neck mate?

## SCORE

65

Skip "game" and go straight to interactive storybook.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb

Minimum Processor: 486DX 33

Hard Disk Space Required: Nominal for saves

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Mouse

Price: £34.99 Release Date: April

Publisher: Virgin Tel: 0181 960 2255



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# LEGIONS



**A**T FIRST GLANCE *Legions* seems a lot like *Civilization*. You take on the role of emperor in an ancient kingdom, build armies, march them around and spend your time doing a lot of conquering and that sort of thing. When you capture other cities, you get more people and you build more armies. And so it goes on. Been here, done all that.

Actually "that" – and the look and feel of the game – is as far as the similarity goes. In *Civilization*, technological achievement and industrial growth are just as important as military might. *Legions* covers only a short period in history, and building nice, useful things has got damn all to do with it. War is war and *Legions* is about crushing everyone else.

In *Legions* you get to choose the empire you want to lead and this governs the types and quality of troops you can build. Only Roman empires can build cohorts, for example, while the less civilised nations, such as the Huns and Visigoths, get slightly less effective units, but ones that are quicker to build.

## For starters...

You generally start off with just one city and a few surrounding towns under its control. In most of the towns there will be a garrison of infantry of some sort and you will have a stockpile of the five main commodities – wood, metal, horses, textiles and technology, plus food/supplies for your military units and some gold in your treasury.

A game turn represents a month, and each town or city under your control will contribute some commodities to the empire's stockpile and its citizens will pay taxes, thereby boosting your bank balance.

Military units – each of which represent from 500 to 2000 men – are created from combinations of the five commodities, with the more useful units, such as transport ships and cavalry, costing more. You can buy and sell the commodities using money from the treasury, but too much buying pushes the price up quickly, just as too much selling off of stock makes it

plummet. This means you have to plan which units you want to buy and when, bearing in mind that the more you have, the more food and supplies are needed.

Unlike *Civilization*, *Legions*

offers only one way for your homeland to grow – by taking over other empires' towns and cities. This increases your turnover of taxes and commodities and helps you build more military units and so on. That said, there's a strong strategy element to it. Because military units consume a hell of a lot of food and supplies when they're in the field, you have to conquer as quickly as possible or watch your economy crumble. Timing is critical, and it's often a case of knowing when to turn back, make your peace and start building again.

## A little whinge...

The main difficulty with *Legions* is a perennial one with computer wargames – there is no clear explanation of how the combats are worked out. Each of the 43 different

**Mindscape's new strategy wargame promises all the excitement of those happy days when men were men and they stuck long, pointed things in you. Andrew Wright looks at the ancient art of war on the ground.**

units has its own stated attack and defence value, a movement rate and production time, as well as a value in terms of the five commodities. Some units, however, are composed of 500 men while others contain 2,000, and units can be whittled down in size in increments of 500 when they take combat losses. However, there is no mention in the manual about how this affects combat, if it does at all.

There are other vague bits too. Each unit has its own description but again there's no indication as to whether it means anything or not. For example, in the manual, archers are said to be most effective against troops fighting in close formation. Quite right too, but do they get a combat bonus against formed troops like cohorts and peltasts? I just can't tell. Nor, I suspect, could the bloke who wrote the manual.

Being a Windows program, *Legion's* minimum hardware requirements are basically a 386 with 4MB of RAM running Windows 3.1, but this is no lightweight program and 8MB and a 486 should be considered a realistic minimum. A good graphics card is also an advantage, because the game is so much easier to play at higher screen resolution as there's less scrolling on the map.

It takes up a surprising amount of space on the hard drive too, like 16MB, and there is absolutely nothing you can shave off that. There are no frivolous graphics or unwanted sound files to chuck away either. Apart from four simple tunes used as background music and an irritating string of battle sound effects while the computer is carrying out turn calculations, there is no sound anyway.

One of *Legions'* biggest selling points will undoubtedly be its network-play capability. ☛



(Far Left) I wish I understood all this economics stuff.

(Left) Let's have some heavy transport, man.







On a Windows compatible network, one player becomes the host and up to 20 other players can actually log into the game, using the built-in search mode. If a player logs off, that empire is then taken over by the computer and another player can log on and take over in turn. However, there is a disappointing lack of support for play by mail (or better still, e-mail) and head-to-head (serial link) modes.

## ...and another whinge

All of the game activities are carried out via nice, colourful dialogue boxes, most of which can be accessed from the toolbar found along the top of the screen. Others are available from the menus or simply produced by double clicking units or cities. As always, nothing is perfect. Map scrolling can be annoyingly awkward when you have a sizable empire to control.

It is also very easy to build a unit in the wrong city. The unit build dialogue isn't linked to the selected city, which means that, in extreme cases, you can build units on the wrong continent. Fair enough, some care is required, but if a defect in the interface design loses you a hard-fought game, it isn't much fun.

Another minor complaint is the lack of a text overlay. There is an overview window available in three sizes, but if you need to locate an empire quickly (following an offer of alliance or whatever) it's pretty much guess and giggle. The automatic search simply takes you to the empire in question, leaving you to work out where it is in relation to your own.

## Just doesn't add up

Aside from the interface difficulties and the lack of combat information, the eco-

(Above) Legions is much better at high res if you can manage it.

(Left) There are various diplomatic (and undiplomatic) options available.

nomic model that forms the root of the game is decidedly suspect, although, sadly, I can't quite put my finger on why. The manual claims all kinds of possibilities for economic warfare – dumping stock to depress the market and so on, but in all the games I played the prices seemed to recover by the time the next turn came round.

The diplomatic side is a bit of a failure too, especially when playing against the computer. Not one of the mean blighters ever sent me a gift (even after I'd had a bath). That said, I soon got bored with sending gifts to other leaders. One of the first things they do to show their gratitude is declare war. As you grow stronger, more and more snivelly messages appear asking for an alliance, but none of them can be relied upon unless you are very strong indeed. In which case, why bother allying yourself with them at all? Just kick the shit out of them, I say.

Despite my moaning, *Legions* is a title which deserves to do very well. It is easy to get involved in, and all the games hot up pretty quickly. Long-term challenge is what it's all about and despite the limited economic and diplomatic aspects, there's several months' gaming in the box. There may be some niggles and gaps in the manual but it still leaps into my top ten. **80**

## Legion of Doom

With most strategy games, it can take many weeks before you win. In *Legions* you can win your first game quite convincingly and then get trounced three in a row.

A lot depends on whether or not you start with geography and technology in your favour. The Byzantines, for example, have heavy infantry called Pellasts, while others have very effective cavalry, such as Lancers.

In a historical scenario you will have certain victory conditions to meet, but in a

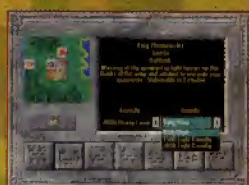
random scenario the best strategy is to strike quickly at your weakest neighbour while greasing up to the others with some gifts and simpering messages.

You can examine the economy of any empire, pick a likely target and build up a force that will totally crush it, quickly and easily. To do this, it is sometimes necessary to sit out the first few turns and disband some less effective units so that food stocks can be built up for the campaign.

With a second city firmly

in your grasp, you should then have the edge over your neighbours. If any of them look like doing the same, make sure you make them your next target. It's also a pretty good move to use your cavalry to probe and patrol, while keeping units on your borders in case of treachery.

Don't forget to store a fair amount of food so that you can mount an emergency campaign at any time. I knew I could make it sound easy...



## SCORE

Despite some annoying gaps, *Legion's* a nice looking Windows wargame.

**Minimum Memory:** 4Mb RAM

**Minimum Processor:** 386 (486 recommended)

**Hard Disk Space Required:** 16Mb

**Graphics Modes Supported:** VGA

**Sound Cards Supported:** Any Windows compatible sound cards

**Controls:** Keyboard, mouse

**Price:** £34.99 **Release Date:** March

**Publisher:** Mindscape **Tel:** 01444 246333







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# BC RACERS

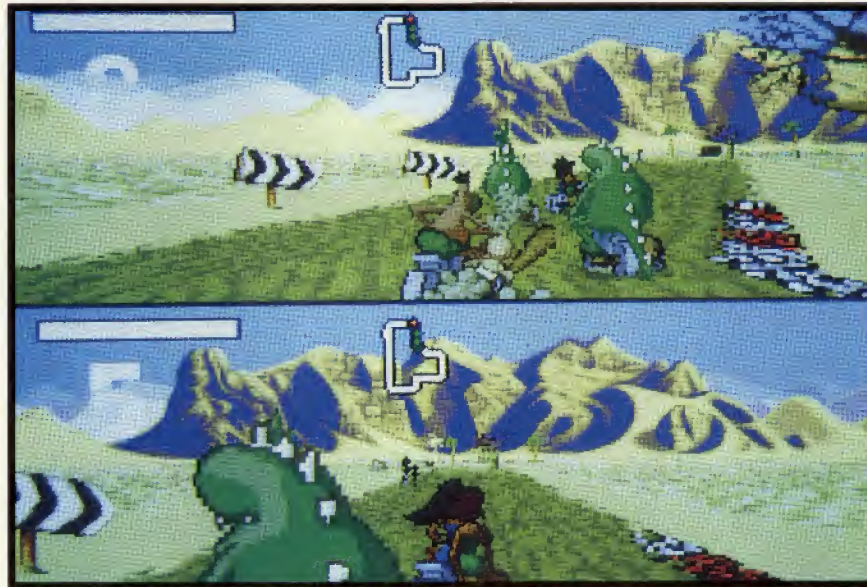


OK", said Gareth Ramsay when asked to review BC Racers. (That's not funny. Ed.)

**S**HORTLY AFTER the Martians colonised Earth as an experimental breeding ground (around 500,000 years ago), they found the water made them a bit dicky and legged it off back home. But their creation, prehistoric man, did pick up a few handy tips from them before they left, one being the internal combustion engine. For thousands of years afterwards, prehistoric motor-cycle and sidecar races were held on one island in the Atlantic every year, where crowds would gather to watch the island's top racers battle it out for the ultimate prize - their very own Boulderdash Bike. Sadly though, when Atlantis sunk, all this technology was lost to the seas and the rest is history. This, unbelievably, is all true.

## Let's do the splits

Anyroad this goes some way to explain the thinking behind BC Racers. (Really? Ed.) It's essentially another Super Mario Karts clone, with the same split screen, head to head two player option - hooray! This feature is one of the things that can really make or break a game, so why are so many developers hell-bent in leaving it out? Most hardened gamers have friends wh..., er... most hardened gamers who have friends are going to find it a lot easier to play split screen than to lug their PC round to a mate's house to set up a network. Although it may not be because a network option has been included too.



(Left) It may conjure up fond memories of Wacky Races, but it's nowhere near as smart.



## Anyone fancy going clubbin'?

As with our Royal's children, beating your opponents about the head with a blunt instrument is the name of the game, and this is the responsibility of your sidecar-inhabiting passenger. Make sure you get some practice in these tactics first, so every time you overtake get as close as possible and have a good whack. When you're confident enough, go home and give it a shot in the game and you'll see their strength go down - hit 'em enough and they're out of the race. The same, obviously, can be done to you.

Sadly though, BC Racers gripped me like a bald tyre on ice. Even the head to head option failed to have any oomph. There's no real skidding when taking a corner at

speed, for instance, so you end up going at full throttle all the way! This, coupled with incredibly short tracks, means one lap lasts no time at all, and with a maximum of eight per race, the whole thing's over before you know it.

If you do wish to persevere with BC Racers, however, there are four skill levels and eight tracks to choose from. You can pick from six duos to control, each with different qualities such as speed, acceleration, etc. This should go some way towards padding out your enjoyment, but unfortunately, I can't see your interest lasting for too long. You can run down spectators, though. ☹



(Left) This prehistoric jaunt's a sort of Chuck Rock boy-racer sim.



**Nice looking, shame about the gameplay.**

Minimum Memory: 4Mb

Minimum Processor: 386DX

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard/Joystick

Comments: Network support

Price: £34.99 Release Date: March

Publisher: Core Design Tel: 01332 297797



# PREMIER MANAGER

# 3

Those people  
at Gremlin  
just don't  
give up, do  
they?  
**Patrick  
McCarthy**  
checks out  
the third  
version of  
their football  
management  
game.



REMEMBER THE good old days, when you could safely make jokes about football managers wearing sheepskin jackets and flat caps and sleeping with Miss Kettering? Or spending so much time on sunbeds that they looked like they had used a packet of porky scratchings for a skin graft? How times have changed. The game has moved on. Even *Premier Manager* has evolved. Generally, it's been for the better, but it doesn't mean that the end result is that wonderful.

I never really understood why the first version sold at all. Alright, there weren't that many management games around when the first version popped up. It had a soap-opera-like quality to it which was fairly diverting at first: your progress through the season would be made more eventful than you'd generally expect by such heartening messages as, "Your supporter's club has burnt to the ground, your wife has run off with the reserve team coach-driver and the winger you paid a fortune for has decided to retire to start a monkey sanctuary in Dorset". But when long strings of freak accidents, fines from the FA and bizarre career-ending injuries meant it became more and more difficult simply to get a team together, the entertainment became irritation. But let's look at some of the aspects we hated and see how they've changed.

## Moan the first

There were several things that particularly irked in the first two versions. The first was that the manual insisted you play the game at random - "Don't expect to win if you play the same formation and tactics week in and week out," it crowed. This goes against the entire premise of football management, where the general idea is to develop a team-playing style and formation that

works for the players you have, and use it. Being told that you'd be unsuccessful unless you changed everything around every couple of games, is making things more difficult in gimmicky ways to compensate for a decent in-game AI. This has now changed to having the same playing styles, except that you have to choose one for every player on an individual basis. So your full-back might be playing a short-passing game high up the middle, and your central defender, a long-ball game to feet. Presumably this is the designers' way of ensuring that you can play the same style every week and vary it hugely, depending on who has the ball. All it means, though, is that the number of variables makes it very difficult to work out where things are going wrong.

## Moan the second

Then there's the obsession with sponsorship and ground development. A large amount of your managerial time is spent allocating advertising hoardings - which is about as exciting as watching Ipswich vs. Leicester - and adding seats to the ground. At least now you can - eventually - allow your assistant manager to handle the advertising. It would have been better to just get rid of it altogether.

## Moan the third

The third - and main - thing is that you still can't simply select your favourite team and start playing. You have to start with a team from the Vauxhall Conference. This is, frankly, a pain in the arse. The whole point of these games is so that you can prove that you can do better than the moron who manages your team. If you can't choose the bloody team, where's the appeal? For example, if you happen to be one of those new-to-football Wolverhampton Wanderers fans who litter the country, then, alright, you're morally reprehensible and a stain on

the underpants of humanity, but that's who you are. And if, rather than doing the decent thing and using a proper football team to play the game, you want to use the aforementioned team of whining spoilt brats, thus making the whole thing absurdly easy - well, again, that's damnable, but should be entirely up to you. There's such a thing as consumer choice. Even consumers with no souls.

So it becomes a little annoying to find that you have to start with a Vauxhall Conference team. Alright, if you do well and get promoted, you'll usually be offered a job with another team. But they're invariably from the Third division, or even worse, back in the Conference from which you've just escaped. And since you've done your job properly, your current team is better than the ones offered anyway. There is no quick way to get to a good side. You can apply for a job with another team as they become vacant, but you have to have a good rating to get it, which means you'll have had a fair degree of success, which means the job that's vacant won't be that appealing... it's not as if the big Premiership jobs come up for grabs or anything. And if you apply and don't get the job, your own board start to hate you.

## Déjà vu

But basically, apart from these annoying features, the game has improved no end. The match graphics are greatly improved, for a start. If the first version had arrived in this state, it would have shown that at least they had a few ideas. But it's hard to give credit when most ideas have been "borrowed" from other games. Many will be familiar to owners of *Championship Manager* (CM

(Right) The extremely complicated team-tactics screen.

(Far right) Icons galore.



## IN PERSPECTIVE

**P**remier Manager 3 is better than the last one but still not as good as *Championship Manager 94* (which has a new version on the way).

Championship Manager 94

Premier Manager 3

Tactical Manager

Premier Manager 2





or Tactical Manager: you can now acquire players on loan; there are European players available for transfer and you can play European competitions; there are now four scouts to find players for you; you can decide who takes free-kicks, penalties and kick offs (vitally important); and you can now customise the playing formation on a grid system similar to that used in Sensible World of Soccer. And finally, transfers take place without your catalytic involvement; owners of CM94, where there is a full on-going transfer market, will be saying, "...and so they bloody should," but this is a new departure for Premier Manager. However, there is still an element of slotting features without copying the reasons for them. Pre-season friendlies in CM94 actually get your players fit; in this they don't do anything.

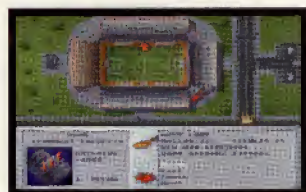
The one area where almost all games differ in comparison with CM94 is the interface: CM94 is beautifully designed. Wherever you are in the game, getting to the next bit you want is almost always just a couple of clicks away. By contrast, Premier Manager 3 (PM3) is a mess of similar-looking icons, meaning that you often can't remember where to go when you need to check something quickly.

Essentially, PM3 is still trying to catch up with features that CM94 has had all along. The fact that PM3 now has many of them, just brings the game closer on the features front, and still doesn't solve some of the problems with the gameplay. And from the way Dark are jealously guarding the secrets of CM 2, they've got something very special up their sleeves. So, although PM3 is a much improved version of the original, it's taken too long to achieve. Gremlin may well find that developments will shortly have them behind again. ☑

(Above) The all-new match screen.

(Below) Build a new all-seater stand, and drive the diehards away.

(Bottom) Another glimpse of that all-new match screen.



73

SCORE

It's better than the previous two versions.

Minimum Memory: 2Mb RAM

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: 7Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, SoundBlaster

Controls: Mouse

Price: £34.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Gremlin Tel: 0114 2753423

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We gave **Gareth Ramsay** a "Big Red Adventure" once – posting a letter without getting lost. Let's hope he's a bit better at this one.

# BIG RED ADVENTURE

**H**OW MANY of you remember the game *Nippon Safes Inc.*? It was a little known Italian point 'n' click affair from a couple of years back, and had about as much going for it as a one-legged racehorse with a broken leg.

The thing is, when I found out this was a sequel of sorts to the above game, I had the same sort of look on my face as a Russian Cosmonaut might have upon embarking on a six-month tour to find he's packed only one pair of underpants and they're his wife's – pure joy! Another game to slate, I thought, and if there's one thing we Brits enjoy, it's laughing at those less fortunate than ourselves. And if there's another, it's slagging off foreigners, and here they are both rolled into one. I mean I'm only two paragraphs in and I've had a go at the Russians already. Sorry.

*Big Red Adventure* sees the hapless trio of characters from the first game (Donna, Dino and Doug) all tangled up in another sinister plot. This time around their task is to raise Lenin from the dead and try to reinstate communism in mother Russia. However, the difference this time is that game isn't half bad, and I actually found the point 'n' click interface very good. Hold down the right mouse button and up pops your inventory, which includes all the usual commands, such as talk, examine, etc.,. Select one and "use" it on screen. Very neat,



very quick and none of this messy cycling-through-symbols type stuff.

## Rolf Harris?

There is, however, something that Dynabyte, the software house responsible for this title, needs – and I do mean needs – and that's a decent writer. I'm not saying the game doesn't have its moments, it does, but it

just doesn't seem to flow. It's like a Rolf Harris painting in many respects – slap a few bits here, a few bits there (can you guess what it is yet?) and eventually, hey presto, a picture appears, but it's no Da Vinci.

The first two chapters

of the game are mini

adventures in themselves and both end with Doug and Dino on the Orient Express.

(Right) Leaving the kids outside, Captain Birdseye decides to pop in for a pint.

(Middle right) Believe it or not, this store is actually the Marks and Spencer of Russia.

(Far right) Be prepared for a peppering of really awful jokes as you look at the mags.





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(Above) This is Doug Nuts. Born in Anorak Central, offspring of a stormy relationship between a computer nerd and his PC, he speaks HEX fluently.

he third finds Donna boarding the same train with some rich bloke that picks her up, and here they all meet. Only in the fourth do we have a whisper of a plot. So if you're the sort of game player who needs a recent storyline, forget it.

### And the upside?

Well, *Big Red Adventure* does have over 100 locations (many of which are a few screens wide), and a variety of solutions to most of its puzzles. In the last chapters, the play can be switched between our three heroes, so it's up to you to decide who's best for which task. For instance, if you feel Dino is more suited to woo the thief back to his rooms or a night of pleasure, feel free to try it out (although I think you need to get out into society more often, if this is the case).

To sum it all up then, if you like puzzles and can put up with the "wacky, off the wall humour", it's worth a look. **72**



## SCORE

**No Sam & Max  
admittedly, but  
it's not too bad.**

**Minimum Memory:** 4Mb

**Minimum Processor:** 386

**Hard Disk Space Required:** 60Mb

**Graphics Modes Supported:** SVGA with at least 512k

**Sound Cards Supported:** All major sound cards

**Controls:** Mouse

**Price:** £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now

**Publisher:** Core Design **Tel:** 01332 297797



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# HARDWARE REVIEWS



## 3DO Blaster

Place a 3DO Multiplayer inside your PC and you can have the best of both worlds – computer and games console. Well that's the theory. **Warren Christmas** checks out the reality

SCORE

76

**Product:**  
3DO Blaster  
**Manufacturer:**  
Creative Labs  
**Distributor:**  
Creative Labs  
(01743 248590)  
**RRP:** Around  
£300



EVERYBODY KNOWS that the PC is the platform of choice when it comes to games – no other system can match it on the number and sheer diversity of releases, while few other platforms have games that offer such depth and advanced features, such as network play. The problem is, of course, that without custom chipsets, designed with games specifically in mind, the PC struggles to re-create arcade games.

Enter the 3DO Blaster from Creative Labs, designed to be plugged into any just about any PC, and offering 100 per cent compatibility with stand-alone 3DO Multiplayers. You can now play computer and console games on a single machine.

### Board senseless

The interface card itself (which is full length and requires a 16-bit ISA slot) contains an entire 3DO chipset. All the work is done on the board, with the video output overlaid onto a Windows desktop, in the same way that TV tuners interface boards work.

As a result, the 3DO Blaster doesn't use the PC's processor and, therefore, system requirements are low. In fact, the minimum specification needed is a mere 25MHz 386SX or better with 4MB of system RAM, and this is only because the software runs under Windows. Of course, what all this means is that anyone with a modest PC set-up can play decent games just by adding a single board – much easier and cheaper than a full PC upgrade.

The bad news is that you need to have a CD-ROM drive, and not just any CD-ROM drive. Ridiculously, the 3DO Blaster only works with the Creative CR-563B. If you don't already own this model you're going to have to shell out an extra £120 or so. You'll also need a sound card, although any model with an on-board CD audio input will suffice, and your VGA card will need a VESA feature connector. By our calculations, two of our readers qualify. Joke.

Installation takes a little time and is fairly complex, mainly because there are so many cables to connect. For most users, however, installation will cause few problems. Once hooked up, by the way, your sound card and CD-ROM drive will still work with your PC in the usual manner.

With the control program and the 3DO Player running, starting a 3DO title is the simple matter of placing a CD in the drive. None of this editing of system files just to get a new game running; no configuration or compatibility problems; and, above all, you can rest assured that the game will run exactly as the programmers had intended – the 3DO Blaster runs at the same speed as a stand-alone 3DO Multiplayer.

### Hot sound and vision?

The 3DO Player software can be configured to run full-screen or in a window. There's a little tweaking that needs to be done when you

first install the software, including a choice of four viewing mode but once set you should be able to play with these settings again. The smaller the viewing window, the sharper the image, although even running at full-screen the results are acceptable, if a little pixelated when viewed at close range. Using the 3DO Blaster, it's obvious that you're not watching a PC game – there's a video-like feel to the image, although personally I don't see this as a problem. Thinking about it, it's a shame that a TV output isn't provided.

Sound quality is best described as "okay" – but it doesn't really match the Panasonic FZ-1 3DO Multiplayer. This is probably because the sound is routed through various boards. At least the Dolby Surround encoding is kept in tact, and if you've got a suitable amp you're in for a real treat with many games.

The single controller that is supplied isn't as good as the Panasonic equivalent – it doesn't feel as good and there's no through port for daisy chaining more joypads. It is possible to use the PC keyboard, a two or four-button PC joystick or even voice control instead, but these options all have their problems. Some games, for instance, can use up to eleven keys (3DO controls pads have a directional pad plus seven buttons), so using the keyboard can be a non-starter.

The software bundle features *ShockWave* – a 3D shoot 'em up from Electronic Arts; *Gridders* – a rather poor strategy game and a sampler disc showing off various recent titles. Plus there's a PC CD-ROM – a cut-down version of Aldus Photostyler. In short, could have been better.

### Damn and blast

Whether a PC owner really needs a 3DO-compatible machine, is questionable (that's for you to decide), but as the list on the right shows, there are some 3DO titles which are unsurpassed on other platforms. To their credit, Creative Labs have done a good job with the 3DO Blaster. In the main it works very well, and it doesn't get in the way of everyday PC use. Sadly though, aside from annoying CD-ROM drive requirements, it's let down in two other key areas. Unlike standalone 3DO Multiplayers, it won't be upgradable to a 64-bit system when 3DO launch the M2 at the end of the year (although Creative Labs do plan to launch a plug-in MPEG daughter board to allow the playback of Video CDs). Secondly, the street price is expected to be at least £300. That's only £100 less than the stand-alone Panasonic REAL FZ-1. If you've got to buy a new CD-ROM drive as well, it just doesn't make economic sense.

The good news, though, is that the price of Creative Labs products tend to drop sharply within a few months of release. We expect the 3DO Blaster to come in at £200 to £250 within a few months. At that sort of price, providing you already own a Creative CR-563B (and a reputed two million users world wide do), the 3DO Blaster becomes a tempting proposition indeed. **Z**



(left) The complete package - you even get a consoley game! But is it really worth all the hassle just to play Road Rash?

## 3DO GAMES

There are over 125 games available for 3DO systems. Here's the pick of the bunch:

### ROAD RASH

Fast motorbike racing mixed with violence - a perfect combination. This version knocks the pants of the original MegaDrive game, with vastly improved graphics, a brilliant grunge soundtrack (featuring Soundgarden and Therapy? among others) and excellent tongue-in-cheek video clips. Dead smart.

**Nearest PC equivalent** Cyclemania - but it doesn't touch Road Rash in any department.



### FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

The 3DO version looks entirely different from the MegaDrive, SNES and PC versions - there's a choice of seven camera views, and it plays better too. Add classic world cup video clips, vastly improved sound and a neat five-player option into the mix, and you've got one hell of a game.

**Nearest PC equivalent** FIFA International Soccer - similar underneath, but lacking the presentation and gameplay.

### JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL

Yet another MegaDrive port. Features excellent digitised graphics, full team rosters, proper team names and video clips. Not as strategic as PC equivalents, but much more playable, especially for the casual Gridiron fan.

**Nearest PC equivalent** Unnecessary Roughness and FPS: Football Pro '95 - neither of which are as playable.

### SUPER STREET FIGHTER II TURBO

The latest in the arcade series arrived on the 3DO before Christmas and it's definitely the best version available for any home system. It's not arcade perfect, but it's as near as damn it. Control is tricky with the standard controllers, though.

**Nearest PC equivalent** Street Fighter II or Mortal Kombat - the former was crap, the latter slightly better. Sequels are imminent.

### RETURN FIRE

This is one of the very few original 3DO titles that really cut it, although it does borrow bits from Desert Strike and Cannon Fodder. Basically it's a "Catch the Flag" game, set in a war environment. Brilliant in two-player mode and host to some fantastic classic music in surround sound.

**Nearest PC equivalent** Desert Strike - good gameplay but, once again, lacking in overall presentation.



### OTHERS

As with any platform, many releases fall into the "good but not brilliant" category. The best of the rest on 3DO include: The Need for Speed, ShockWave, Total Eclipse, Star Blade and Off World Interceptor. Of course, there are a number of titles available which have been ported from the PC to 3DO, including Theme Park, (Super) Wing Commander, Rebel Assault, The Horde, The Incredible Machine, MegaRace and more, but none of these offer huge enhancements.

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# Wired for

Shakespeare wrote "If sound effects be the food of love, play on..." one night after a particularly heavy *Doom* session with Christopher Marlowe and the boys, and who are we to argue with him...? (Well, David Mathieson and Duncan Swain, actually.)



# T

HE THING IS, of course, that you can have the best game in the world and the grooviest sound card on the block, but without a decent set of speakers you might as well use the bleepy rubbish that emanates from your PC's own speaker. If you've got your machine in the same room as a decent home stereo system, then often the best option is to connect the stereo to the output from your sound card in order to get the maximum volume and sound quality. The problem with this set up, however, is that you can't listen to *Ace of Spades* at full volume while charging down a corridor with your chaingun blazing - something that everyone should try at least once.

The way out of this dilemma is, obviously enough, to buy a separate set of speakers and plug them into your PC, thus leaving your stereo alone for other brands of noise. Although we keep referring to them as "speakers", all the sets on test here also contain a built-in amplifier, so you won't have to worry your pretty little heads about pumping up the signal from other sources.

In order to cater for the skinter amongst you, the prices of the units on test vary from £10 to £70, while the power outputs vary from a pert 4w right up to a neighbour-pissing-off 180w, so after reading this, you've got no excuses for sitting around in silence (unless you still live with your parents, of course, in which case you'll know all about playing alone without making any noise).

## 1 Zy-Fi Pro 2

Zydec (01386) 769400  
£59.99

This is the more expensive and bigger of the two sets of speakers we tested from Zydec. Rather nicely styled in an off cream sort of colour, with treble, bass, volume and power switches on the main box. These speakers stand about nine inches high and five inches wide, which is quite bulky if you happen to be pushed for desk space. However, this is more than compensated for by the quality of sound produced with deep, throaty bass rumbles complemented by chirpy trebles. Excellent value for money.

Rating: 9/10

## 2 Zy-Fi 2

Zydec (01386) 769400  
£34.99

Little brothers to the Zy-Fi Pro and looking just like a half-sized version with a single-tone control instead of separate bass and treble buttons. Sound effects and music for our bench test games were good, but not excellent, lacking the highs and lows provided by the bigger and more expensive speakers that we tested. However, for just £35, you're still getting your money's worth.

Rating: 7/10

## 3 CS-600

Labtec (01844) 345406  
£32.99

Small, compact and complete with power button, treble, bass and volume controls, the CS 600s can be powered either by batteries or a mains supply, unfortunately, though, you're supplied with neither of them. The sound quality is reasonable with more of a bass kick than most of the opposition of a similar size, but for an extra few quid you'll probably be more pleased with the Zydec's.

Rating: 5/10



# Sound

## SBC8235

Philips (0181) 665 6350

9.99

These low-priced speakers from the Dutch electronic giant, Philips, are shaped like a couple of those old microphones used by 1930's sports commentators. The controls are pretty minimal (on/off) and if you want to adjust the volume, you'll have to do it either from the game or by adjusting the sound card itself, both of which can be a real pain. As with many other low-end speakers, the sound is a bit up top, but anything too bassy causes much "farting" (in Doom terms, this translates to great chaingun, rubbish rocket launcher), and if you want a bit more welly, you're going to have to be prepared to shell out more money.

Rating: 6/10

## Music Sound 20W PMPO

Primax (01865) 744346

4.95

With the Zydec Zy-Fi 2s, these are less powerful relatives of the much heftier 180 PMPO's, and are rated at 2.5 watts per channel. It's not surprising that these speakers fail to deliver the goods if bleeding ears are your thing, as with all speakers of their size, they start to sound pretty bad if you try to crank them up at all. For some strange reason Primax has omitted any volume controls on these speakers, which means that you have to use the output on the sound card to control the noise level. While cheap, they sound okay at low volumes, but really you'd be better off splashing out on something a tad more hefty.

Rating: 5/10

## FX20

itech (01734) 814121

11.70

Although the cheapest of the bunch by quite a way, the Aztechs have reasonable sound quality at low volumes. Try pumping them up, though, and they start distorting pretty badly - you'll even have trouble scaring yourself stupid while playing your fave blast 'em up. Still, if cash is tight and you want to be heard, you could do worse, although you'll need to fork out for a power supply as well.

Rating: 6/10

## Music Sound 180W PMPO

Primax (01865) 744346

39.95

The name "180w" seems to imply a scary amount of volume. The reality, however, is that these speakers, while loud enough, deliver a sw of power, not 180. The overall sound quality was pretty good, and there's plenty of volume as well. The best thing about them, however, is their sexy, curvey shape that should lend a sophisticated euro-ambience to the nerdiest of bedrooms.

Rating: 7/10

## SC-C55

Aiwa (081) 897 7000

49.95

These cute-looking jobbies from Aiwa are probably aimed more at the multi-media user rather than the gamer and - like the other smaller speakers reviewed here - can't really handle anything too loud. That said, they give nice, crisp reproduction on music and sound effects, and they also have a surround button which is supposed to enhance their "stereo-ness", but in fact, just seems to turn down the volume a bit. Although well made, for this money you can probably get something a bit more meaty.

Rating: 7/10

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Melvyn Bragg

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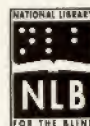
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2. There are absolutely NO anoraks involved in it's production.
3. It contains a large quantity of swamp stew.
4. It's vastly superior to it's predecessor and features lots of features.
5. It's chock full of myths, legends, fairy tales and beards.
6. It's fortified with vitamins and minerals.
7. It features superb quality graphics and sound which will knock your socks off.
8. It's available April 95 (on CD-Rom) so that it can form part of a calorie controlled diet.
9. The word 'crevice' is used 43 separate times.
10. It's a bit of a laugh really.

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## Noctropolis

Running faster than a speeding bullet and leaping tall buildings with a single bound is all in a days work for a super hero. But what happens when an everyday Joe gets the chance to become a super hero? Can you save the city of Noctropolis from a band of evil villains, or will you make a complete pig's ear out of the job? Fear not, for the Hackmasters have been out on the rooftops in their masks and black cloaks, and we've ZAPPED! and BOFFED! our way to victory in this great comic-book adventure. Let me take you walk you through, starting at...



## THE BOOKSTORE

Get the bills from the floor then go to the office. Get the letter and the ticket from the desk then pick up the comic from the

footstool. Read the comic then return to the shop and answer the door. In response to the weird visitor you can hand over the ticket and receive a mysterious package. Open the package and remove the gold and silver tokens. Use the silver token, and with a flash of light you'll be transported into the dark world of Noctropolis.

## MAIN STREET

There are only two places in Main Street that are of interest - the news vendor and the Hall of Records. Talk to the news vendor and, when prompted, offer him your comic in exchange for information. In return he will answer all of your questions - especially the address of the priest. Use the travel command to move to the Cathedral.

## CATHEDRAL

Talk to the boy sitting on the wall, then get the loose fence post from the top of the wall at the left side of the screen. Pick up the coil of wire lying on the ground beside the left-hand lamp standard, then move to the right-hand lamp and open the access hatch at the base. Use the coil of wire and the fence post to zap the flying gargoyle which guards the entrance. Enter the Cathedral.

Move into the confession booth and talk to the screen. The screen will open to reveal the priest. At this point it is wise to save your game position before you go any further. Getting the questions correct will result in you being given a bone - not the





greatest of presents, but at least it means he likes you and you will also avoid getting shot, which is always a good thing. Make sure you ask the priest about everything before leaving. Now travel to Stiletto's apartment and have a pointless chat with her. It doesn't matter what you say at this point because you won't succeed in getting inside this girl's flat, or her affections – looks like your charm has still got some way to go. Travel back to Main Street.

#### HALL OF RECORDS

Enter the Hall of Records and use the bone. You will be told that it belonged to Benjamin Hutchins whose remains now lie in the City Mausoleum. At this point you may quiz the clerk on all he knows. (Note: You can talk to the clerk by pointing at his tiny silhouette which appears in the shadow just below the monitor screen.) Travel to the City Mausoleum.

#### CITY MAUSOLEUM

Enter the small door to the right of the screen and read the note on the coffin. This

will give you a map position for the Bornick Mansion.

#### BORNICK MANSION

Travel to the mansion and speak with the lady of the house. Again, you won't receive any vital information from this idle chat, but she is quite a looker! Travel back to the Mausoleum.

#### CITY MAUSOLEUM

Re-enter the room with the coffin, then move the body nearest the door to reveal a key. Use the key to open the coffin then climb inside. At this point you will be transported to the mortuary and be set upon by the sexy Succubus. After a short romantic interlude with the young lady in the lacy underwear, you will be left on your own to recover your breath and rearrange your underwear. Move the angel statue to reveal a hidden staircase. You can pick up a piece of lace, which the wind blows into a crevice in the wall, but there doesn't appear to be any use for this memento of your recent encounter. Head downstairs.



#### SUCCUBUS DEN

Move the pillow on the bed to reveal the diary. Read the diary and discover the plot to blow up the Cathedral with a bomb. Find the box of explosives beside the mattress and take the metal spear from the statue. Use the metal spear to prise open the grille and exit the den.

#### CATHEDRAL

Travel back to the cathedral and you'll find the priest lighting candles. Warn the priest about the bomb. Once you are told to search for the bomb, pick up the chalice from the altar and use it in the holy water fountain. Move the cushion lying before the altar and remove the detonator from the bomb. Travel again to Stiletto's flat, have yet another pointless conversation, then return to the Cathedral.

When you return you will find the Succubus attacking the priest. Stiletto will appear and attempt to save the priest, and if you time your move correctly, you will be able to use the chalice of holy water to destroy the gorgeous monster.

As you are suffering from the poisonous bite of the vampire you must now travel with Stiletto to your secret headquarters, known as Shadowlair, to be cured by being immersed in the Black Pool.

#### SHADOWLAIR

A quick punch-up with Stiletto is now on the cards just to show her who's boss. Once she retires to the pavilion, badly hurt, you may move the right-hand column of the Egyptian statue to reveal a book and the Noctroglyph. Open the column on the far right of the room to find your super hero costume, then dive into the pool to charge everything up for the adventure to come.

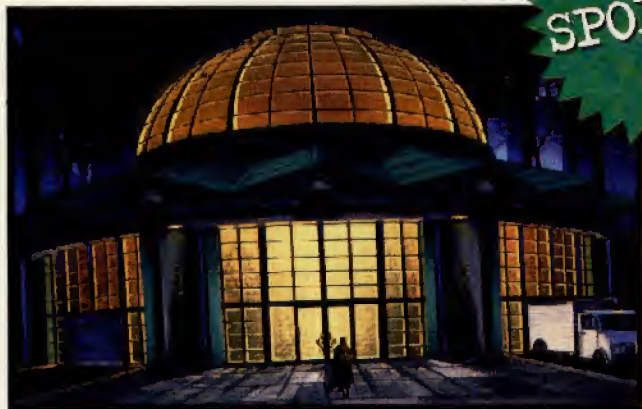
Take a trip to Stiletto's apartment and you'll now find that she is ready to become your faithful assistant (amazing what a smack in the mouth has done for her). Go to the Sunspire building and speak with the guard. No matter what you say he will tell you that you must speak with Mr.

(Above) Fun! Fun! Fun!

(Left) The city...in all its Batman-esque gothic glory



SPOILED!



(Above) Make sure you've got the glass cutter to get inside the greenhouse

(Right) When you go to the Cygnus building, don't forget the elevator card

☞ Jenkins at the Cygnus Building before you can gain entrance to the site. Looks like you are going travelling again. "Quick Robin, to the Batmobile."

#### CYGNUS BUILDING

Enter the building and pick up the elevator card which lies to the right of the reception desk. Speak to the receptionist, and try to get an appointment to see Mr Jenkins. Ask her for a glass of water and sympathise with the receptionist over the state of the central heating. Make the deal with her, that if you can persuade the handyman to switch on the air-conditioning, then in return the receptionist will arrange a fast meeting with for you with Mr Jenkins.

#### BASEMENT

Enter the basement and talk to Leon. As this will get you nowhere at all, you will then need to talk to Stiletto. Your beautiful assistant will now step forward and get the result you have been seeking.

Now use the red switch to get the air-conditioning on-line, then you must return to reception and have a talk with the secretary.



#### JENKIN'S OFFICE

Pick up the clock from the floor, ask Mr Jenkins all he knows, then return to the reception. At this point a telephone call will remove the receptionist and leave you free to head for the elevator. Once inside use the elevator pass and you will be taken to Ms. Shoto's office. Talk to Ms. Shoto then leave and return to the Sunspire Tower.

#### SUNSPIRE TOWER

Look at the truck to get info on the garden centre then talk to guard. Persuade Stiletto to talk to the guard. While the guard is distracted by your beautiful buddy, sneak into the site. Pick up the glass cutter from the top of the lumber pile. Go to the platform and move the bricks. Move the platform to the first floor and pick up the piece of glass. Return to Stiletto, travel to the news vendor and ask for the location of the Greenhouse.

#### CENTRAL PARK GREENHOUSE

Go to to the truck and pick up the seed and fertiliser. Return to the main door and use the glass cutter to get inside. Talk to Greenthumb. Once you are well and truly strung up, Greenthumb will tell you of the evil plan about to take place at the Opera. Use the Liquidark grenade, then pick up Stiletto and leave. Grab the poster from outside and return to Shadowlair to heal yourself.

#### MAIN STREET

Ask the clerk in the Hall of Records about the Opera House and this will give you the map indicator.

#### OPERA HOUSE

You can try picking up the prostitute outside, but whatever it is that she wants, you just aint got it!

Enter the theatre and talk with Top Hat.

#### OBSERVATORY

Use the Noctroglyph to get past the security camera, then use the Quickgrow solution to turn your seeds in wall-devouring ivy. Save your game position here.

Avoiding the lights, move to the right of the screen and pick up the screwdriver. Move to pick up the oilcan, then grab the logbook from the platform. Use the oilcan and the screwdriver to open the cover then grab the lens. Move to the spot where the oilcan was and save your game position.

You can now try and get back across the screen, avoiding the lights, but you will find this extremely difficult. Never fear - get yourself killed then restore your saved game position and you will find that the game has kindly moved you to the exit and saved you from an evening of aggravation. Return to the Opera House.

#### OPERA HOUSE

After your spin on the wheel, pick up the





Below) Be careful as you move through each of the rooms



knives and return to Shadowlair for a healing bath. Return again to the theatre and move the switches to reveal the trapdoor in the stage. Pick up a brick from the pile then move to stand on the trapdoor. Use the brick to open the trapdoor and lower yourself below the stage. Get the jewellery box and the make-up kit from the table. Move the costumes to reveal a door. In the room next door, pick up the screwdriver that lies on top of the steam pipe and use it to remove the locked door. Move the valve on the wall, then pick up the hose to demolish the brick barrier. Enter the next room and talk with the street punks. Offer the jewellery in exchange for information and you will be told of a butcher's lorry. Travel to the news vendor and ask about the butcher and you will be given a new map reference.

#### BUTCHER'S SHOP

Talk to the butcher and offer him a newspaper in exchange for a sausage. (Ah, if it were only like that in real life.) Go next door to the freezer and pick up a hook. Move the carcasses twice to reveal a ladder, and before you can blink you will be captured by the mad doctor. Move the beaker then move the cart. Once you are free, get a beaker from the shelf and go next door. Use the beaker to collect some acid then go into the room containing the large fan. Move up close to the fan, then, timing your move, jump between the blades into the adjacent room. From the rubbish on the left of the screen you must collect the wheel. Use the glass shard to cut a length of rope from the right side of the room. Return to the fan room. Use the rope to smash a hole through the wall, then, with a flick of the wrist, you can use the acid to create a bridge across the canal. Now move into the

chandelier room and pick up the re-bar from the floor. Return to the room with the swinging balls and use the re-bar to repair the catwalk. Enter the room with the hot door and use the wheel to shut off the canal water. (At this point you can get the net from above the doorway, return to the room with the Xmas tree lights and trap a rat, but there appears to be no use for this.)

Return to the chandelier room and cross the empty canal. Give the make-up box to the disfigured accountant and begin to open the exit door. The door will open when you successfully line up three complete lines of the single colour which correspond to the colour tag on the edge of the door. Move the bottom peg out of the door into the spare slot to begin with, then shuffle the others into the correct position. Travel to Shadowlair and take a black bath.

#### DREAMLAND

Talk to the Dreamer then pick up the bucket of paint. Enter the clown's mouth, followed by the screaming clown's mouth. Pick up the dental pick then return to the entry screen and use the pick to enter Jack's Funhouse. Get the matches, then return to the right-hand clown's head and enter the Demon Room through the tower doorway. Get the oil lamp then leave and enter through the door which is created by moving the screen next to the screaming clown. In the Web room you can use the match to ignite the web. Pick up the silver cross and a piece of web which is found above it. Return to the Demon room and use the cross to dispel the demon. Get the diamond and go again to the Funhouse, where the diamond can be used to cut a door in the glass cover. Move the pepper pot then pick up the spilt pepper. Enter the screaming clown's mouth and use the



pepper to obtain a paint brush. Outside the mouth, the paint brush can be used to create a doorway to the next location. Use the web as a rope to the Tower doorway, then move the runner at the base of the door to find the key. Once you are through the doorway you will be set upon by our small, bald friend, and it's back to Shadowlair for you.

#### CYGNUS BUILDING

As it's obvious that Ms. Shoto knows more than she is saying, you must pay her another visit and ask about the Whisperman. If you persist she will reveal that he is her father and is to be found beneath this very building. Return to the street outside and get a piece of the fence from around the lamppost and use this to open the sewer. Inside you will find a furnace which must be fed a number of times with old chairs from the rubbish nearby. When the floor opens up you can plunge in and arrive in Whisperman's lair. Now little grasshopper, it is time for you to be treated to a load of mystical revelations which will reveal that the gamewriters are fans of the *Star Wars* and *Rats of Nym* movies. Never mind – you have endured much in this game so you should also be able to withstand this. Return to street level and head for the elevator. Use the logbook and you will appear on the roof. Use the hook to slide to the Sunspire Tower, then pick up the roll of tape that you'll find. Climb the stairs, pausing to pick up the rope and the broom. Tie the sausage to the rope and use this to deal with the guard dog. Use the broom with the tape to gain entrance to the final sun room.

Your final ordeal is to listen to another bucketful of nonsense from the guy in the golden suit. Bite your lip and think of England to get through this ordeal, then, at the last minute, use the gold token to summon one of the immortals to save the day. Hooray! You've saved the city and won the heart (and the other more interesting bits!) of the lovely Stiletto. **Z**





**FEATURE**

The Ultimate PC



Photography by Mike Harding. Telephone 0171 274 9030

NUT NUTTER

BAST

NINJA

THE

# ULTIMATE

TURBO NUTTER PC  
NINJA BAST



**"Nah, that's rubbish, you'd be far better off with a private jet because then you could get around much faster."**

**"Fair enough, but if you had a decent yacht you could cruise around the Caribbean and have all your mates on board for massive parties the whole time..."**

**T**HE ABOVE IS a very short excerpt from a typical "If I won the National Lottery" argument, which is traditionally replayed around the country on Saturday nights down/after the pub by sad people. Of course, if you did actually win the lottery, you'd probably just buy a nice new PC and give the rest of the money away, right? All right, you probably wouldn't, but if you won, say, £10,000, you might just treat yourself to some new kit. With this amount of cash, you could buy a pretty awesome games PC, and still have a bit of change left for a couple of "lesser" machines, so you could have mates round for network *Doom*.

What form would this PC-from-Hell take? Well, we've blagged, stole and borrowed all the bits and pieces that we think should make up the ultimate games machine, put them all together, and sat around bickering over who has the first go.

### Cor! Get a load of that

The problem with games is that they have to be good to look at. Most other applications, like spreadsheets and databases, are

bought to do a job, and although life is a bit easier if they're a tad zippier than normal, most people couldn't really give a monkey's if their fave wordprocessor takes a fraction of a second longer than normal to save to disk. But with games, speed is everything, and once you've played (or even just seen) most games run on a fast machine, the inadequacies of your own set up will nag you to do something about it.

Unless you only buy PC Zone for the pics (and very nice they are too), you've probably noticed that the minimum spec. for many games at the moment is at least a 486DX/33, and this is with all the detail turned off. If you're buying a PC for games these days, you'll need at least a DX2/66 to be able to appreciate most of the effort that the games' developers have put into it. To really show off, though, we're talking Pentiums, and a new crop of games are emerging, like *Wing Commander 3*, which is pretty shite on anything less.

In six month's time, it's more than likely that we'll see the introduction of Pentium-only games, while in two years time we'll all look back at the kit featured here and have a good laugh. Don't forget that Intel and other such hardware manufacturers are currently working on new processors the whole time, and the successor to the Pentium (the Sextium?) will be giving developers a good excuse to include new levels of realism in their games.

### PC

Right, let's take a look at an ESL Pentium 90-based machine with 16MB of RAM and a

1GB Enhanced IDE hard disk, shall we?

As we keep saying, you need a monster processor to keep the hounds of Jerk-O-Vision at bay, and a Pentium 90 is just such a processor. Up to three times faster than a 486DX2/66, the Pentium has all the power that you'll need to run, say, *US Navy Fighters*, in SVGA resolutions, with a decent level of detail, and will give other games a massive boost in performance. While 16MB of RAM may sound a bit silly to anyone who used to own a 48K Spectrum, *Magic Carpet* need this much to run in SVGA, while *Wing Commander 3* plays too slow on anything less.

The first law of disk usage is that they always fill up about five times faster than you think they will, and although many games keep their files on CD-ROM, transferring as much as possible to a much faster hard disk, speeds things up considerably. A 1GB drive should have enough room for full installations of lots of games, while the speed of this drive makes waiting around for games to load a thing of the past.

£2,265

ESL (0171) 498 7816

### CD-ROM drive

Although most games are fine with a double-speed drive, many now feature full-motion video clips, and if you want to avoid annoying frame drop-outs, a quad-speed drive is the one to go for. This NEC MultiSpin 4xi is just such a unit, but it needs a separate SCSI adapter to connect to the PC which will cost another £50 or so.

£429

NEC (01345) 300103



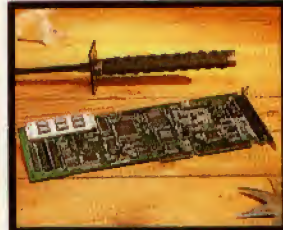
This Pentium 90-based system from ESL oozes enough power to make even the fussiest of games just fly along.



To get the most out of video clips, the NEC MultiSpin 4xi runs at twice the speed of a normal drive, making jerky frame dropping a thing of the past.



To really show off you need plenty of inches in the monitor department. This Vision Master 17" job from Idek Iiyama offers plenty of scope for big graphics.



Rather than putting up with the cheesy sounds of a cheapo card, we've gone for this SoundBlaster AWE32 with its wavetable instruments and superior sampling ability. Just to be extra flash, we've stuck a couple of 1Mb SIMMS onto it to bump up its sampling capacity.



Packing a massive 4Mb of memory, this STB Pegasus graphics card can display graphics at silly resolutions with loads of colours.



## 17" Monitor

The best way of immersing yourself in a game is to either get a nice, big monitor, or to sit dangerously close to a small one. To avoid eye-strain, we've gone for an Idek Iiyama Vision Master 17" monitor, which'll give us plenty of size and really show off the extra detail in SVGA games.

£704

Idek Iiyama (01438) 745482

## Sound card

Apart from the graphics, the most vital thing about a game are the sound effects and music. The Creative Labs SoundBlaster AWE32 has a wavetable chip for those realistic instrument sounds, and many games are designed to take advantage of its features. The sample playback capabilities of the AWE32 mean that you can have plenty of sound effects playing back at the same time, without that annoying "cut-off" effect that you get on less capable cards.

£235

Creative Labs (01743) 248590

## Graphics Card

Although most graphics cards are designed to accelerate Windows, and seldom affect DOS games, the increasing use of SVGA means that you should go for a reasonably common chipset for maximum compatibility. The advent of Windows 95, however, means that in about a year's time, there'll probably be games designed to run under Windows itself, and so getting a decent graphics card could well be a good investment. This STB Pegasus card has 4MB of

RAM, and will run Windows in true colour (16 million) at 1280x1024 resolution.

£469

Imago (01635) 861122

## Modem

Although modems are by no means an essential piece of kit for the average gamer, having one means that you can download all sorts of stuff from the Internet or CompuServe, as well as play networkable games like *Doom* with similarly equipped mates. This Hayes Optima 288 supports the V.34 standard, which means that it can theoretically chuck data around at 28,800 baud. (This is fast - take our word for it!)

£499 (£586)

Hayes (01252) 775500

## Amp/Speakers

Of course, there really is sod-all point in having a big, posh sound card if you've not anything to put it through. Apart from using a fully-fledged hi-fi amp and speakers, the heftiest set up we could come up with was this Aiwa TS-D20 Super Woofer amp and speakers. Rather than the tinny, clattering sounds of cheap speakers, this kit gives big, throbbing, meaty sounds that'll make your trousers shake. (Um, yes, I think I'd better stop now!)

£130

Aiwa (0181) 8977000

## Joysticks & Joypads

When it comes to specialist joysticks for flight sims and other sims, you just can't beat the Thrustmaster range. They're big,

they're butch and just the thing for an extended bout of *US Navy Fighters* or *Falcon 3.0*, especially when you've got the Weapon Control System on hand as well. If you're into racing games in a big way then you'll just have to invest in a Thrustmaster T1 driving wheel and pedals. And if you think *NASCAR* and *SuperKarts* are fast and furious then try playing them with a wheel.

The Gravis gamepad is regarded as the best card available. It's solid, comfortable and an absolute bargain at around £20. Perfect for all arcade games from *Mortal Kombat 2* to *Zool*. Believe me, no gaming set up is complete without it!

£20 (approx.)

Thrustmaster (0171) 636 7099

Gravis (0171) 352 9402

## RealMagic Card

If you want real full-motion full screen video sequences in your games, then you'll need an MPEG decoder card. There are quite a few of these cards available already but the one with the best games support is undoubtedly the RealMagic card. By installing this card inside your PC, you can play games like *Return To Zork* and *The Horde*, and see the video sequences full screen with highly-impressive picture quality. The RealMagic card also allows you to read CDI and Video CD disks, so you can watch movies and pop vids on your PC too. Oh yes, make sure you have a compatible video card in your machine before purchasing the RealMagic card.

£249

RealMagic (01426) 456780



Be the coolest Net-surfer on the block with this Hayes Optima 288. Alternatively, you can play games like *Doom* with friends, without having to endure their smell.



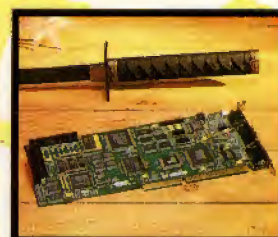
Rather than sitting around like a big wuss with a pair of headphones on, this TS-D20 amp and speakers combination from Aiwa has enough power to keep your neighbours thumping on your door all night long.



There's nothing more annoying than trying to play a game using a crappy controller. The Thrustmaster joystick will make flight-sim heads feel like Douglas Bader with legs, while the Gravis gamepad gives nice, console-like responsiveness to platform and shoot 'em ups alike.



No, it's not a child's clip-on pretend steering wheel - it's aimed at grown-ups who like that extra bit of realism in driving games. The Thrustmaster T1 wheel and pedals help to give that authentic "wheel-spinning away from the lights" feeling to the budding boy-racer.



Although not really used for games at the moment, a RealMagic MPEG card will enable you to play full-screen video from the comfort of your own PC.



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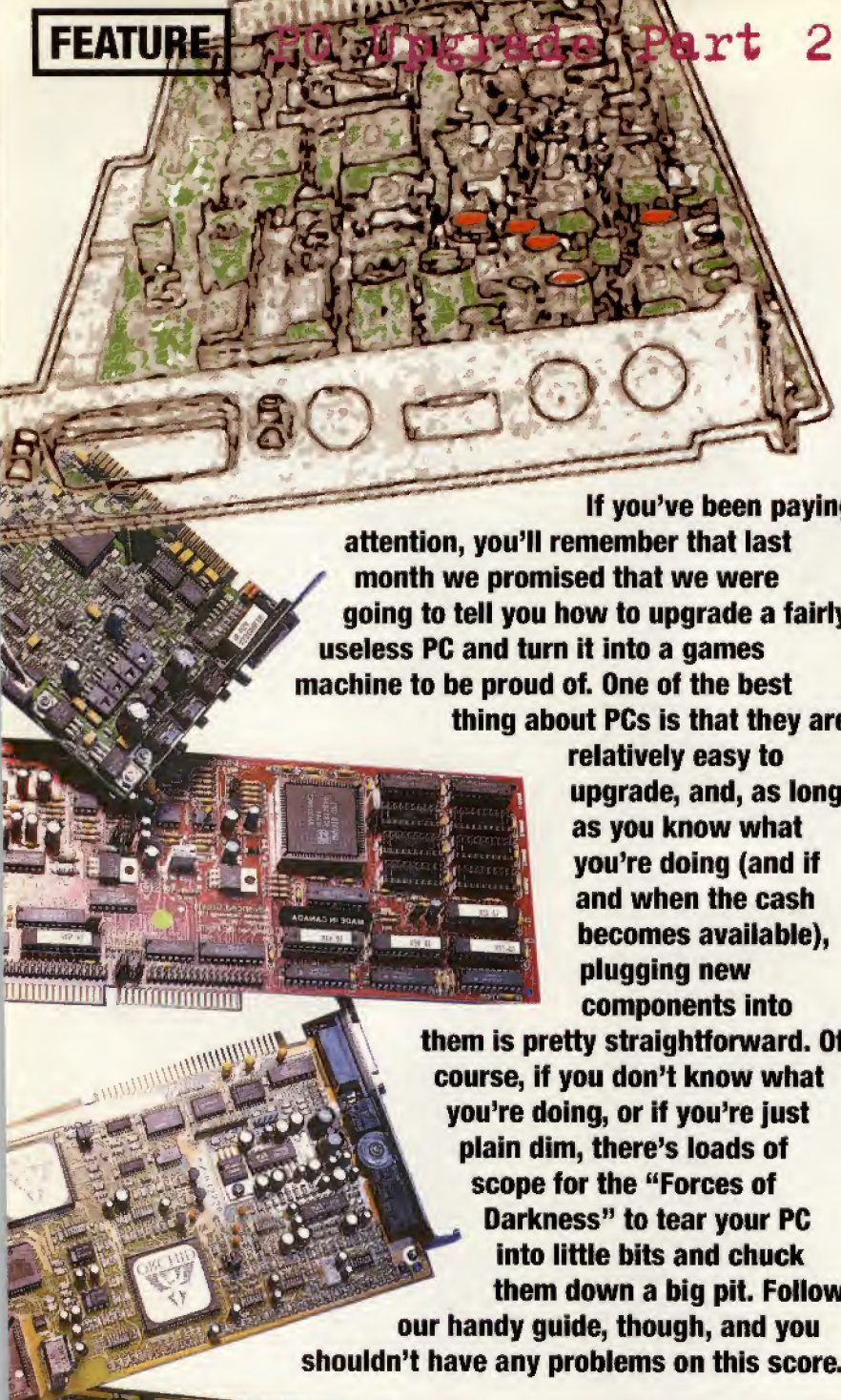
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If you've been paying attention, you'll remember that last month we promised that we were going to tell you how to upgrade a fairly useless PC and turn it into a games machine to be proud of. One of the best thing about PCs is that they are relatively easy to upgrade, and, as long as you know what you're doing (and if and when the cash becomes available), plugging new components into

them is pretty straightforward. Of course, if you don't know what you're doing, or if you're just plain dim, there's loads of scope for the "Forces of Darkness" to tear your PC into little bits and chuck them down a big pit. Follow our handy guide, though, and you shouldn't have any problems on this score.

# PC

## UPGRADE

### PART 2



IN LAST MONTH'S issue, we told you how we reckoned you should spend £200 on improving your gaming-life. Although you can make a few improvements with this amount, to really sort things out you'll need a bit more than this, so now it's time to step up a gear on our ninja quest...

#### Upgrades up to £500

In the £200 bracket, you can either buy a new processor or a hard disk, but not both, so an obvious place to start is to buy both (aren't you lucky to have our in-depth knowledge at your disposal?). For £500 you can buy a 486DX2/66 chip and a 525MB hard disk, and still have about £120 left over after the VAT-man has taken his chunk. Add a 16-bit sound card, and that's your lot.

The problem with this set up, though, is that basically you've stuck the engine from a Porsche, the seating from a luxury coach and a Blaupunkt stereo into an X-reg. Capri. If your PC is more than about a year-and-a-half old, the chances are that it's probably got a fairly slow motherboard and an ISA bus. This means that a fair amount of the power that you've put into it is wasted, as the rate at which

# GRAPHICS

## Visual





# SOUND

## Audio

data is transferred to and from the hard disk, CPU and graphics card is not as high as it could be. The only way to deal with this is to buy a new motherboard and although they don't cost much (about £70), selecting the right one can prove to be a bit of a nightmare.

### First things first

The first thing to check is that the board that you intend to buy will fit in your PC's case. Although most PCs have standardized boards, there are exceptions, and you may also have to buy a new system case as well (once you get to this stage, it's probably worth considering buying a new system anyway).

Another thing to take into account is whether or not your disk controller and graphics card are integrated onto your existing motherboard, or whether they are separate. If they are integrated, then buying a new motherboard means effectively chucking them away and replacing them (more £££s).

Assuming everything is lovely, and you do decide to go for a new one, fitting it should be a matter of disconnecting everything in sight, plugging your old cards back in, fiddling about a bit, and powering up. "Aha!" you're probably thinking, "this all sounds fine and dandy, but what's this fiddling about stuff?" What it involves is setting up the BIOS (basic input/output system) of the new motherboard to tell it about the bits that you have attached to your system. The BIOS contains very low-level information about hard disks, memory and CPU, and changing these values will be covered next month when we actually put it all into practice and upgrade the PC in the office.

As if hogging megabytes on your hard disk isn't enough, modern games increasingly want to hog as much RAM as possible, as well. Where once 4MB was plenty, games like *Magic Carpet* and *Wing Commander 3* are at their best with 16MB, and many others need at least 8MB. RAM prices tend to be fairly stable, and vary between about £25 and £35 per megabyte. Before dashing out and splashing out, however, you need to find out if you've got enough room for any new SIMM's (single in-line memory modules - the type of RAM chips fitted to PC's). Most PCs have four SIMM slots, and each SIMM can be anything from 1MB upwards. It's more than likely that your machine has had all its slots taken up by four 1 meg SIMM's. To upgrade to 8MB you'll have to

buy a complete set of new SIMM's and forget about the existing 4MB.

### And finally...

The final piece of kit that you'll need to get your hands on in order to run many of the decent games about at the moment is a CD-ROM drive. Up until a few months ago, these were still a bit of a luxury, but the huge capacity of CD's has made them irresistible to games' developers, and installing from a single disc is a lot less hassle than wading through a big stack of floppies. You can get

a double-speed drive for less than £100 these days, which is fine for games. However, if you're feeling a bit cashed-up, you may consider going for a triple- or quad-speed model, but this is only

worth going for if you have a fast PC, as the extra power is wasted on anything less.

You may be thinking that a big, posh graphics card should also be on our shopping list. Well it's not, and here's why. Most such cards contain accelerator chips which take some of the workload from the processor. The problem is that, these chips are only designed to speed up Windows graphics, and they usually have no impact on DOS games. To work out whether or not your graphics card is slowing your PC down, turn the detail off in your game. If this speeds up the frame rate to an acceptable level, then it's not the graphics card

that's causing jerkiness. Because of the way PC's handle graphics, the card has to do the same amount of work (in a given resolution) regardless of the amount of stuff on the screen. If you use Windows, though, getting a decent card will make a big difference, and it may be worth getting one for this reason alone.

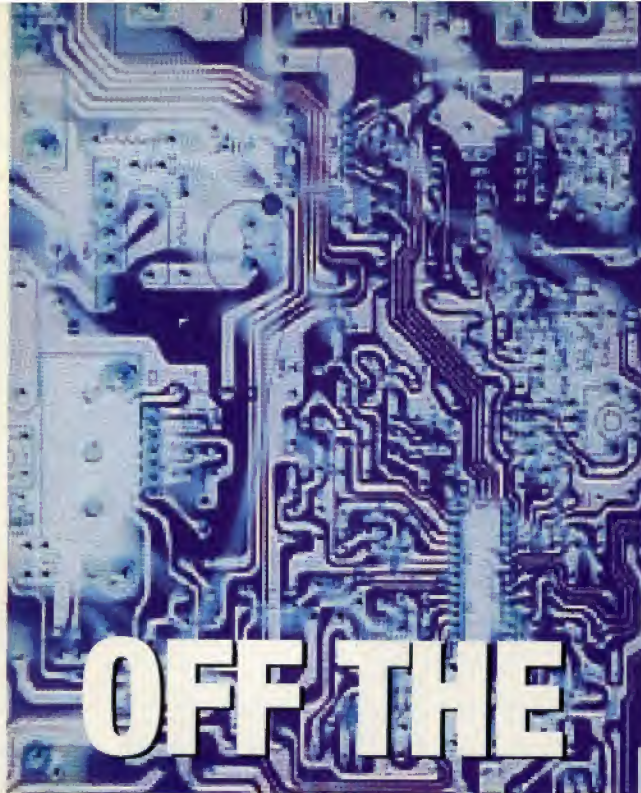
Okay. Hopefully this has given you a few ideas for sorting out your machine. As mentioned earlier, next month we'll actually carry out all of these improvements to our "test machine", and, of course, we'll let you know how we get on. ■



**"Where once 4Mb was plenty, games like Magic Carpet and Wing Commander are at their best with 16Mb..."**







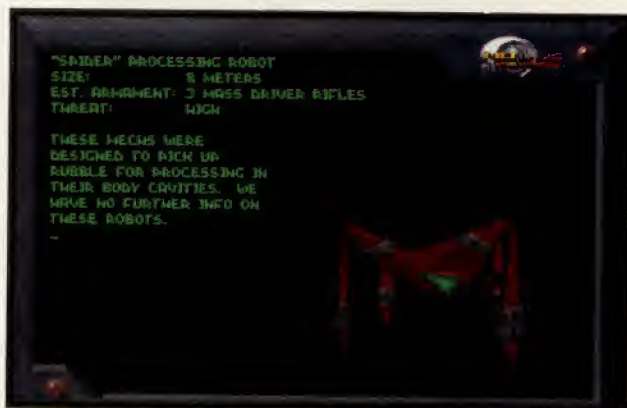
# OFF THE BOARDS

**Mark Burgess** has a few classics for you this month: *Descent* – one of the best shoot em 'ups, ever; Terraforming in *Highway Hunter*; and a very weird program (and no, it's not French!)



(Above) Ready to kill and ready to die in *Descent*.

(Right) One of the many mutant robots out to get you.



## DESCENT

**D**ESCENT is one of those programs that justifies shareware. Few companies would be ashamed of it as a commercial product – and quite a few would be envious. If *Heretic* was *Doom* in tights, *Descent* is *Doom* in spaceships and one of the best shoot 'em up games, ever.

The plot centres around trouble at the mine. In this case the mine is on Pluto and run by the ruthless Terran Minerals Corporation. Some sort of aliens have taken the place over and are making their own robots to invade earth. Only you can save the day, so you are given an Israeli-made PYRO-GX and sent on a suicide mission. Your aim is to sort out the trouble by shooting things, rescuing hostages and destroying reactors. Once you've blown up the reactor, there's only a short space of time for you to get out before the whole place blows up.

Those of you with long memories will recall the excellent *Hovortank* of the late '70s. But only the plot recalls *Hovortank*.

This game has some of the best graphics around. If you want to know what *Quake* might be like, look at this. You can pan all round a perfectly rendered 3D world. Everything is smooth and detailed. The sound is excellent and atmospheric. The gameplay is just the right blend of diffi-

culty and intuitiveness. You fly through mazes of corridors, never knowing what's behind the next corner. There's an automap, which displays the mine in glorious wireframe 3D. Various weapons are left around, and you can get more by destroying enemy craft. You cycle through the various weapons with the number keys – just like you do in *Doom*.

And just like *Doom* again, *Descent* has a network option: up to four players, IPX network – the usual thing. However, the program will tell you who you have killed (or who has killed you) and there are handy macros so that you can insult other players from a selection of abusive messages. There's a built-in recorder so you can play back your moments of glory.

A huge amount of thought has gone into this game – every aspect of it. There's even a .pcx file of a quick reference card. Interplay reckons that the program should run on a 386-33, and there are options for turning down the detail for slow computers. On a 486, it shows its stuff – and a clean pair of heels to the competition.

**Shareware from:** Parallax Software & Interplay Productions

**Registration:** £29.99 from Mr. Lee Ginty, Computermates,

The Wheel, Robin Way, Cuffley, Herts EN6 4BR

**Needs:** 386-33 or faster (486 or Pentium recommended) at least 4MB RAM

**Supports:** Stereo sound card with MIDI support







(Left) Low cloud cover and a nasty right in Highway Hunter

## HIGHWAY HUNTER



**I**T'S SIX YEARS SINCE the Axis of friendly planets took over the earth and started terraforming it. Unfortunately, terraforming kills all the human life.

You play one of the rebels – a sort of “No Terraforming in Godalming” protester – who has been sent to prison for rehabilitation. Instead of concentrating on an Open University Sociology degree, you help the Axis design a brilliant combat machine called the Multi-Attack Super Turbo Energy Ranger: one of those weapons where the designer works backwards from the acronym. Then you break out to punch through the security, rejoin the “Save Tring From Terraforming” lot and save the world. Easy peasy, right?

Highway Hunter is a vertical scrolling game, like *Galaxians*.

There is a difference in that you have to negotiate bends and curves on the highway, but basically you shoot things and collect power ups. These range from simple weapons and shield units to things that make you invincible or destroy everything else in view. There are nine available weapons, and as you find weapon upgrades, your current weapon increases in power. If you exceed the amount of power your current weapon can handle, your weapon will be upgraded to the next available weapon. But weapons take energy and if your upgrade runs out of energy, your weapons system will revert back to the next lower weapon.

The shareware version has one episode, *Evil Drivers*, with five levels. Registration brings another two episodes (*The Lost Roads* and *Anarchy*) with a manual and a bonus disk. The program was written by the Omega team from Russia, and they have produced a good, smooth-scrolling blastfest with great sound. It's designed for a 386 or faster machine but you can alter the speed of the game to match your computer (or your reflexes).

Unfortunately, after *Descent*, the rest of this month's games are going to look a bit sad. *Highway Hunter* is a perfectly respectable shoot 'em up that would have got top billing any other time.

**Shareware from:** Omega for Safari Software

**Registration:** £23.99 from Epic MegaGames UK, 11 Baker Ave, Potton, Beds. SG19 2PJ (TEL: 0767 260 903)

**Needs:** Fast 386 or better, 570K free RAM, 2 Megs HD space, VGA

**Supports:** joystick or mouse & SoundBlaster or compatibles



## This month's programs

### CompuServe

Forum	Section	Program	Filename	Size
GAMERS	Action Games	Highway Hunter	highwa.zip	863612
GAMERS	Action Games	Descent	descen.zip	2883231
GAMERS	Edutainment	Win Europe	eurwin.exe	163101
GAMERS	Action Games	Six Feet Under	sfu.exe	602904
GAMERS	Other Games	Inner Space	inspac.zip	717774

## WHAT IS PUBLIC DOMAIN AND SHAREWARE?

### PUBLIC DOMAIN



This is software that's free. You can copy and distribute it as you like. The only conditions are that: you do not pass the work off as your own; do not incorporate it in another program without due credit; and, of course, that you do not charge money for something you have got for nothing.

### SHAREWARE



This is software that asks for a registration fee, either after a specific time or “if found useful”. The fee varies enormously and you are morally obliged to pay it or stop using the program, although it is true that many programs ask you to send \$5 to an address in Wichita. A leading shareware author recently estimated that about 90 per cent of users don't register. Registration brings the latest version of the program; a place on the mailing list for updates; and, often, a properly printed manual. Not to mention a warm glow of moral satisfaction.

### OTHERS



**Bannerware/Adware:** These are programs where the author does not ask for any payment but reserves copyright. This means that you have a free license to use and copy the game.

### DEMONSTRATIONS



Many commercial software houses will release a playable demo of their latest games so that you have some idea of what you're expected to pay £50 for. Not often found in libraries, they tend to live on the cover of magazines or on bulletin boards.

## WHAT DO YOU GET?



The disk should contain a file called **READ.ME** or **README**.  
1ST. Read it by typing: **TYPE README.1ST | MORE**. There will also be some sort of batch (.BAT) file in the disk. Typing in the name of it should load the program. Most programs will come in archived form. This is because the library is trying to fit as much information as possible on a 760k disk. The files will have extensions, such as .ARC, .ARJ, .LHA, .PAK, or .ZIP. However, the disk will come with a program that will decompress the files, together with instructions on how to use it.



## WIN EUROPE

**T**HIS IS A geography quiz. You might expect the worst from an American program (Vietnam is in Europe yes/no), but in fact, this is a tough test.

You are presented with a map of Europe and have to name countries, capitals, exports and features. The time can be varied from between five and 50 seconds for each question. With the Baltic states and the chippings from the former Soviet Union, I needed at least 30 seconds and never got the pass mark of 90 per cent.

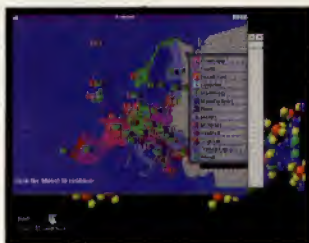
It's accurate, and the only thing I could find to sneer at was that the program believed coal and manufacturing to be the main industries of the UK. As we all know, we don't have coal mines and factories anymore, but I suppose arms dealing and tourism would have been tactless.

The graphic display does the job and you will have to be a real swot to get more than 70 per cent in any of the tests. The shareware version is actually the European section of a program called *Around the World!* Registration brings the other continents of the world and the solar system.

**Shareware from:** Torpedo Software

**Registration:** \$14

**Needs:** Windows 3.1 or later, 1MB of free RAM, a VGA monitor or better, and a mouse.



## INNER SPACE



**T**HIS IS A SERIOUSLY weird program. On the face of it, it's supposed to be just a game. But it's a game where the really frightening thing is the disk access. What happens is that the program announces that aliens have invaded your hard drive and that you must enter inner space to hunt them down. Then it says "reading MS-DOS 6", or whatever your hard disk is called. That is when you start to panic, but there's no need.

*Inner space* scans your hard disk and puts the icons on screen for you to capture, in a game that is strongly reminiscent of *Asteroids* (unless the program senses from the system timer that it's lunch time, in which case you will hunt burgers and fries). The aim is to clear space of debris. Because the game builds its arena from the your hard-disk structure and contents, you never play the same game on different computers.

You have a choice of 111 ships, ranging from the Aquatic Bullet to Zen Master. The game comes with a utility to design your own. It also installs itself as a screen saver. The latter is no surprise as the firm behind it is Software Dynamics Inc., the company that wrote the *After Dark* screen saver.

*Inner Space* works for two weeks, after which you must register if you want to keep all the features. These include stunning sound and voice over. Registration also brings free membership to CompuServe. Well worth a look but, like I said, weird.

**Shareware from:** Software Dynamics Inc.

**Registration:** \$29.95

**Needs:** Any machine that can run Windows 3.1 and above



## SIX FEET UNDER



(Above) The man from CZA decides what to do next in *Six Feet Under*.



**T**HIS IS DESCRIBED as an arcade puzzle game, and its main claim to fame is that it will run on any machine that can run Windows. It's even happy in a multi-tasking environment. That's most of the good news out of the way.

What you get is a puzzle game a bit like *Heartlight*. You have to collect things and make the exit. The early levels are easy – in fact, they're an insult to the intelligence. However, the levels do get progressively harder. There are time penalties and hazards which mean that you must complete tasks in a certain order – and quickly – to finish the level.

One of the things that puzzle games must get right is the speed at which things get difficult. I found that things got tough round about level eight, and that well-known feeling of "that's just not fair" set in.

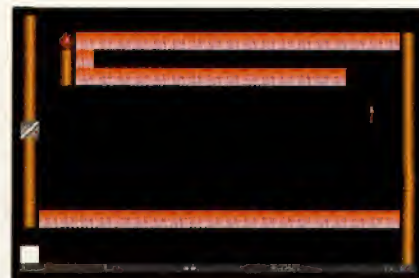
The graphics are fairly good for a Windows game, but there are better puzzle games out there, with smoother learning curves. It would be ideal for a young age group. I'm not being nasty; the puzzles simply aren't strategic enough for adults.

This program adopts a good idea for registration. For your \$15 you get a code that unlocks your version. You don't have to wait around for a disk to arrive. Several business packages are being distributed this way. You get to try a CD-ROM of the program for 30 days, and if you like it, you phone up with your credit card and get the code that unlocks the disk. They reckon this procedure is pirate proof, but I reckon what is encoded somewhere can be found.

**Shareware from:** Enque Software

**Registration:** \$15.00

**Needs:** Any machine that can run Windows





FREE CLASS STAGE

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# BUYERS' GUIDE

**W**elcome to the all-singing, all-dancing **PC Zone** Buyers Guide that is to gaming what the **BR** timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here – painstakingly compiled by our very own engine driver.

## Issue 1 – April 1993

### Dune II

(89: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Strategy £35.99  
Civilization meets Sim City in a frantic space 'em up.

### Lemmings 2: The Tribes

(88: Recommended) Psygnosis – Puzzle Game £39.99  
A brilliant reworking of one of the best computer games ever written.

### Ragnarok

(60) Mirage – Board Game £35.99

As the great man said: if you like this sort of thing, this sort of thing you like. Let down by too many inessential, flashy bits and not enough on the main, interesting idea. As stand-alone shareware, The King's Table would rate 75%.

### Reach For The Skies

(52) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £35.99  
Uninspired ww2 flight sim with pretensions to strategy that don't stand up to close inspection.

### Shadowlands

(60) Krisalis – Role-Playing Game £34.99

We asked a hundred people who'd played Shadowlands if they thought it was a damn good game with a smart control system. They said "Yes". Our survey said "Eek-err". Sorry, they lose.

### Stunt Island

(82: Recommended) Infogrames – Flight Sim £49.99

A unique simulation that combines all the fun elements of flight sims with superb 3D construction, film and editing utilities. A bit on the pricey side, but good value for film buffs nonetheless.

### Tegel's Mercenaries

(50) Electronic Arts – Strategy – Deleted

Not funny. Not entertaining. And not very good.

### The Complete Chess System

(80: Recommended) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Chess £34.99  
Good enough for the expert, easy enough for the beginner.

### The Legend Of Myra

(65) Grandslam – Puzzle 14.99 – £10 direct

One of the best Boulderdash clones to appear recently. Hardly original, but fun for a while if you've got fast reflexes.

### Transarctica (CD)

(55) Simarils – Strategy £39.99

Reads a lot better than it plays. Very disappointing.

### Ultima Underworld II: Labyrinth Of Worlds

(94: Classic) Origin – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Just go out now and buy it, okay.

## Issue 2 – May 1993

### Archer Maclean's Pool

(87: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £25.99

Excellent pool game. An impressive, if not wildly different, sequel to Whirlwind Snooker.

### Battlechess 4000

(81: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99

Brilliant, funny and with a workmanlike chess sim attached. But for how long will it stay funny?

### Blade Warrior

(40) Zeppelin Games – Combat £9.99 (£12.99 CD)

Arcade combat jaunt with a smattering of detailed quest elements.

### Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space

(90: Classic) Interplay – Strategy £39.99

Testing strategy/historical simulation. Buy it.

### Crystals Of Arborea

(47) Simarils – Role-Playing Game £22.99

A badly designed RPG with only its price to recommend it.

### Heroquest

(66) Gremlin Graphics – Board Game £11.99

A good, but uninspired conversion of the classic board game.

### Jordan In Flight

(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99

Looks good, plays okay. There's just not enough to it, and it's a bit too easy.

### Metal Mutants

(45) Simarils – Combat £22.99

Impress your friends – this disk makes an unusual coaster that will brighten up any coffee table.

### Ringworld

(80: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99

An engaging interactive point 'n' click sci-fi romp.

### Shadow Of The Comet

(87: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99

A successful attempt to recreate the work of Lovecraft for game players. A must buy.

### Space Quest V: Roger Wilco The Next Mutation

(72) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99

Better than the usual twee nonsense from Sierra.

### Spear Of Destiny

(60) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Out classed, out of time and overpriced.

### Storm Master

(70) Simarils – Strategy £12.99

An attractively presented and absorbing strategy game.

### Veil Of Darkness

(70) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £35.99

Good script, easy to play but a little short.

### Wacky Funsters

(30) Accolade – Compendium (not available in the UK)

The game never gets beyond being the equivalent of an enjoyable demo.

### X-Wing

(88: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Combat £45.99

Fabbo space-based shoot 'em up.

### Xenobots

(75) Electronic Arts – Combat £39.99

A spanking good, strategic shoot 'em up, which has too short a life expectancy for our liking.

### Zool

(85: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Platform Game £34.99

The best platform game released for the pc so far.

## Issue 3 – June 1993

### DJ Puff

(62) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99

Okay, but it looks like an 8-bit console game.

### Dogfight

(50) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99

Far too easy, major flight model discrepancies and grass can kill you. All in all, a pile of jobs.

### International Athletics

(55) Zeppelin Games – Sport £9.99

Fun as far as it goes, which isn't far.

### International Rugby Challenge

(67) Domark – Sport £34.99

Scores a try, but doesn't quite manage the conversion.

### Serpent Isle: Ultima VII Part Two

(89: Recommended) Origin – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Origin's flair for storytelling and atmosphere creating pays off once again.

### Spaceward Ho!

(25) New World Computing – Space Combat £44.99

There are better strategy games for free.

### Strike Commander

(65) Origin – Flight Sim £44.99

There are lots of brilliant bits, but unfortunately there's also an equal number of "unbrilliant" bits.

### The Greatest

(70) Beau Jolly – Compilation £39.99

A good way to save £81.98 and try out some good, if slightly old, games.

### The Legacy

(60) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £44.99

A brave attempt to create a gothic role-playing game which doesn't quite gel.

### The Terminator 2029

(50) Bethesda Softworks – Combat £29.99

Terminal Case.

### Tony La Russa II

(73) SSI – Sport – Deleted

An exceptionally-detailed baseball game, and almost a very good one.

### Unlimited Adventures

(59) SSI – Role-Playing Game £37.99

Competent, but not the most essential purchase ever.

### Wayne Gretzky Hockey 3

(69) Bethesda Softworks – Sport £44.99

May appeal to buffs, but has nothing to attract the casual browser.

### World Cricket

(30) Zeppelin Games – Sport £9.99

Fails to provide either action or strategy.

## Issue 4 – July 1993

### Boston Bomb Club

(70) Simarils – Puzzle £9.99

Fairly basic but fairly addictive puzzler.

### Cohort II

(30) Impressions – Strategy £34.99

All the fun and entertainment of a barium meal.

### Eye of the Beholder III: Legend Of Myth Drammor

(64) SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Has none of the feel or atmosphere of its prequels. Strictly for the yellow-fingernailed brigade only.

### I'm afraid.

**Freddy Pharkas Frontier Pharmacist**

(85: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99

An utterly absorbing, entertaining and difficult point 'n' click adventure with some incredibly naff in-jokes.

### Maelstrom

(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99

You've read the review – you decide.

### Nippon Sales Inc

(66) Global Software – Adventure £34.99

Great plot, nice artwork, decent price but nothing out of the ordinary.

### Populous And The Promised Lands

(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Strategy £14.99

One of the greatest games ever written – buy it!

### SimLife For Windows

(69) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Strategy £35.99

If you liked SimEarth... Fun, but not lasting fun.

### Space Hulk

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99

Death, destruction, blood, gore, tension, fear, and a damn good game as well.

### Starblade

(22) Simarils – Space combat/Trading £9.99

It crashes a lot, but why care?

### Strike Fleet

(75) Hit Squad – Wargame £14.99

A worthwhile addition to naval sims.

### Super Ski II

(20) Microids – Sport £9.99

Sad, specy ski game.

### The 7th Guest

(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99 (CD)

Technologically okay, but disappointingly weak on gameplay.

### Tom Landry Strategic Football

(75) Merit Software – Sport £44.99

A very good, strategic, American football sim that could do with more player involvement.

### V For Victory 3 – Market Garden

(82: Recommended) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £34.99

Why bother with boards, hexes and counters when you've got games like this?

### Where In Space Is Carmen Sandiego?

(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Edutainment £39.99  
Educational, fun and highly recommended.

## Issue 5 – August 1993

### 10 Intelligent Strategy Games

(60) Oxford Softworks – Compendium £34.99

Good sampler and cheap if you need them all.

### 688 Attack Sub

(78) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99

Sub-standard? Definitely not!

### Air Bucks v1.2

(49) Impressions – Strategy £34.99

A potentially interesting variation on a theme, which fails largely due to being more than a tad unexciting.

### Betrayal At Kronider

(91: Classic) Dynamix – Role-Playing Game £44.99

The licence makes a lot of difference – great story, great game.

### Championship Manager '93

(75) Domark – Sport £29.99

An undoubtedly "serious" management game that's involving, but occasionally unnecessarily slow.

### Chess Maniac 5 Billion & 1

(60) Spectrum Holobyte – Chess £44.99

Falls between two stools – and I'm being very nice here.

### Dizzy Collection

(60) Codemasters – Compilation £35.99

Contains: Fast Food Dizzy, Fantasy World Dizzy, Kwik! Snack, Dizzy Prince Of Yolkfolk, Magicland Dizzy.

A poor egg-scuse to make totally unfunny egg yolks. Just about playable.

### Ishar 2: Messengers Of Doom

(50) Simarils – Role-Playing Game £32.99

Would have been a real contender if it had been released a year or two earlier.

### James Pond 2: Codename Robocod

(87: Recommended) Millennium – Platform Game £30.99

Only available in a compilation

"Nifty scrolling, great gameplay" is our first remark on playing Robocod, closely followed by

"Has anyone got a pair of sunglasses?"

### Premier Manager

(59) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £29.99

Not recommended as a full-priced game – it would make a good, fun budget game.

### Prince Of Persia 2: The Shadow And The Flame

(89: Recommended) Brøderbund – Platform Game £39.99

We reckon they could have done more with it, but it's a corker nevertheless.

### Proteostar

(80: Recommended) Tsunami – Space Combat/Trading £39.99

A slick game that's full of nice touches and good ideas, but if you're not patient, don't bother.

### Syndicate

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99

Incredibly violent, completely amoral and brilliant fun.

### The Cycles

(55) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99

Sadly, an overpriced and underpowered ride into the past.



X-Wing: groove on down to the old "destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess" tune



## Nar In The Gulf

81: Recommended) Empire – Wargame £34.99  
Another great set of blood-thirsty missions for one of the most playable 3D battle sims ever.

## Worlds Of Legend

73) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £25.99  
Perfectly reasonable but rather old-fashioned fantasy RPG jobbie.

## WWF Wrestlingmania

58) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99  
Fairly limited beat 'em up, which was delivered much better on the console.

## Issue 6 – September 1993

### Blade Of Destiny: Realms Of Arkania

78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £39.99  
Large in scale, absorbing to play – but more suited to "serious" role-players than your average gamer.

### Blue Force

35) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99  
Firesome controls and sloppy design mar what could have been a decidedly average adventure.

### Caesar's Palace For Windows

65) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Casino Compendium £35.99  
A good compilation; unnervingly addictive.

### Fields Of Glory

89: Recommended) MicroProse – Wargame £44.99  
A brilliant sim that puts even the most reluctant wargamer right into the thick of it. Only its speed prevents it from being awarded Classic status.

### Flashback

89: Recommended) US Gold – Platform Game £37.99  
It's Prince Of Persia in the future (but this time he's got a gun).

### Lotus – The Ultimate Challenge

68) Gremlin Graphics – Driving Game £34.99  
Nothing particularly new, but good fun, especially in two player mode.

### Maniac Mansion 2: Day Of The Tentacle

85: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £42.99  
Lovely graphics, good music, quite challenging but a bit too American for my roast beef and dumplings taste buds.

### MIG-29: Fulcrum

70) Domark – Flight Sim £14.99  
Almost no scenery, but a nice flight model.

### Monopoly

75) Supervision – Board Game £34.99  
A faithful conversion, which is slightly too flashy for its own good.

### Napoleonic

79) On-Line Entertainment – Wargame Compendium – Deleted £34.99  
Three excellent and original Napoleonic wargames for tactical experts.

### Open Golf

50) Ocean – Sport – Deleted  
A disappointing foray into the world of golf sims from Ocean.

### Pinball Dreams

78) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Simulation £37.99  
As enjoyable as the real thing, but a bit on the pricey side.

### Prehistorik 2

50) Titus – Platform Game £7.99  
A very average platform game, which competes with some budget titles but little else.

### Rags To Riches

60) Interplay – Strategy £39.99  
Lacks excitement; unlikely to have a long life.

### Return Of The Phantom

73) MicroProse – Adventure £44.99  
Delightfully atmospheric and aimed at beginners, but a tad too short and easy to justify the price.

### Sensible Soccer

70) Renegade – Sport £34.99  
The best football game around for the PC, but still not as good as it should've been.

### Space Legends

75) Empire – Compilation £34.99  
You'll like at least two out of three.

### The Immortal

70) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99  
At least four Sunday afternoons' play we reckon.

### Tornado

93: Classic) Digital Integration – Flight Sim £44.99  
The more you play, the deeper it gets – eventually you'll need a bathyscape. Not for beginners.

## Issue 7 – October 1993

### Ambush At Sorinor

70) Empire – Strategy £39.99  
Short, sharp missions, and plenty of them, make this an interesting strategy game.

### Archer Maclean's Pool (256 colour version)

88: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £30.99

Exactly what it claims to be – the same game with more colours. Score assumes you don't have the original.

### Caesar Deluxe

70) Impressions – Strategy £34.99  
More user-friendly than its predecessor but the game remains the same.

### Clash Of Steel

67) SSI – Wargame £39.99  
Intricate and well presented wargame with plenty of appeal for the dedicated wargamer.

### Day Of The Tentacle (CD)

87: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £45.99  
A very taxing, very American adventure, with some of the best animation ever.

### Dune (CD)

82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99

A shining example of a good game made into a great game for CD.

### Eric The Unready (CD)

77) Accolade – Adventure £34.99  
Hilarious, but the creaky interface isn't so funny.

### F-15 Strike Eagle II

86: Recommended) Kixx – Flight Sim £16.99

It still holds its own in a dogfight.

### Flames Of Freedom

70) Kixx – Strategy/Arcade £9.99  
A bit old, a bit saggy, but will still give purists much fun.

### Galactic Warrior Rats

75) Alternative Software – Arcade £9.99  
Totally simple, totally basic, but quite good fun nevertheless.

### Gunboat

54) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99

A better idea than game.

### Hardball

20) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99  
Interesting only as an example of how bad baseball games used to be.

### Imperial Pursuit

80: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Sim £19.99  
Long, involving "story-driven" tour of duty, perfect for Skywalker-wannabes.

### King's Quest VI (CD)

90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £49.99

Excellent use of a CD, despite the "soft" story.

### Lands Of Lore

90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Role-Playing Game £35.99

A tasty and involving reminder of what Eye Of The Beholder III could have been.

### Legend Of Kyrandia (CD)

82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99

Stunning to look at, but not really challenging enough if you're the type who has played a lot of adventures before.

### LHX Attack Chopper

88: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99

Still one of the classic flight sims.

### Loom

72) Kixx – Adventure £14.99

Simple and enchanting adventure; an ideal game for beginners.

### Mean 18"

60) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99

Reasonable mid-table golf game.

### MIG-29

75) MicroProse – Flight Sim £19.99  
An excellent add-on for Falcon 3.0 fans, but nothing groundbreaking in flight sim terms.

### NHL Hockey

91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99

A great version of a brilliant game.

### Pirates Gold!

75) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99  
As good as the original. Unfortunately, it almost is the original.

### Railroad Tycoon Deluxe

72) MicroProse – Strategy £39.99

Not significantly better than the original, but if you haven't got that then add 20% to the score.

### Ringworld (CD)

82: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99

An alternative to having it on disk; nothing more!

### Rules Of Engagement 2

91: Classic) Impressions – Strategy £44.99

A game of great depth and complexity.

### Seal Team

77) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up/Strategy £44.99

In storyboard form I imagine it looked fabulous. In transition to code, however, it feels like something has gone astray.

### Simon The Sorcerer

86: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £39.99

At last an Anglo answer to the average American adventure. Recommended.

### The Last Vikings

80: Recommended) Interplay – Arcade £34.99

An excellent puzzle/platform/arcade game (categorise it yourself, we can't be bothered).

### The Patrician

65) Daze Marketing – Trading Sim £34.99

Desperate for a trading game set in the Hanseatic League but which could have been given more zap? Look no further.



Simon The Sorcerer: at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

### Wing Commander Academy

60) Origin – Flight Sim £19.99  
This is only really worth it for Wing Commander combat addicts.

## Issue 8 – November 1993

### Battle Chess

45) Interplay – Chess £44.99  
Stalemate for the Battlechess series.

### Blue Force (CD)

40) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99  
A criminal waste of a CD.

### Conquered Kingdoms

71) Mirage – Wargame £44.99

The rather second rate packaging and laughable manual conceals a highly playable, fantasy wargame.

### Cover Girl Strip Poker

40) On-Line Entertainment – Card Game £34.99

An appallingly bad poker game; a weak excuse for some dirty pics.

### Flight Simulator 5.0

90: Classic) Microsoft – Flight Sim £35.00

The definitive flying simulation, but not the definitive flying "game".

### Gear Works

62) The Software Business – Puzzle Game £19.99

Not good enough for the price and not cheap enough for what it is.

### Grand Prix Circuit

50) Hit Squad – Driving £12.99

Playable but crap for the price.

### Hard Drivin' 2

30) Hit Squad – Driving £12.99

Unplayable and crap for the price.

### Homeworld: Gateway II

75) Accolade – Adventure £39.99

Long, hard trek through pretty unatmospheric space.

### Lord Of The Rings

70) Interplay – Role-Playing Game £44.99

New and improved role-playing Tolkien jaunt for patient fantasy fans only.

### Lost In Time

69) Coktel Vision – Adventure £44.99

Tough, good looking adventure that comes a cropper at the end.

### Motor Stars

75) Revell – Racing £59.99

Sex on CD for kit-heads but coffee mat for everyone else.

### Patriot

45) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £44.95

A revolutionary but seriously flawed approach to land-based wargaming.

### Shadowlands

65) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £12.99

One for the RPG addicts.

### Solitaire's Journey

87) Mirage – Puzzle £44.99

The closest that solitaire fans will get to Heaven on Earth.

### Stronghold

80: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99

Extremely addictive even if you'd normally steer clear of D&D™.

### Super Space Invaders

75) Hit Squad – Arcade £9.99

Here's a blast from the past for less than a round of drinks.

### T2

80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade £29.99

Mindless, chaotic and highly addictive.

### The Silver Seed (Ultima VII Add-On Disk)

50) Origin – Role-Playing Game £19.99

An utterly pointless addition to a brilliant game. One can only turn to Origin and ask "Why?"

### Troddlers

79) SGI – Puzzle Game £29.99

Not at all bad, but it smacks too much of other games to achieve classic status.

## Issue 9 – December 1993

### Blue Angels

30) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £12.99

Interesting, but hardly spectacular.

### Brutal Football

65) Millennium – Sport £29.99

Too much violence, not enough game.

### Chuck Yeager's Air Combat

85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99

Living proof that pensioners still have what it takes.

### Clix

62) The Genesis Arcade – Puzzle Game £14.99

Nice idea, shame about the gameplay.

### Cogito

57) Mindscape – Puzzle Game £29.99

A reasonably entertaining and challenging puzzle game, but only for the patient.

### Dark Sun: Shattered Lands

83: Recommended) SSI – Role-Playing Game £45.99

The next best thing to an Ultima.

### Dino Dini's Goal

60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £35.99

Kick Off with sideways options (but it works). Not as good as Sensible Soccer.

### Dracula

65) Psygnosis – Arcade £39.99

A good, challenging game, but the execution should have been better.

### Frontier: Elite II

95: Classic) Gametek – Space Trading Sim £39.99

Without doubt an unrivalled classic; nothing else even comes close.

### Front Page Sports Football Pro

85: Recommended) Dynamix – Sport £39.99

The best around, but you'll definitely need a high-spec machine.

### Gobblins

50) Coktel Vision – Puzzle – £39.99

An unimproved CD version of an original but inspired game.

### Hook

35) Hit Squad – Adventure £12.99

At last we have perhaps the most faithful film conversion around. The movie was a turkey, so is the game.

### Jack The Ripper

39) Mirage – Adventure £44.99

Ugly, unpleasant and boring. Give it a job with PC Zone.

### Jutland

72) On-Line Entertainment – Strategy £59.99

Good but sadly there are too many unnecessary gimmicks.

### Kasparov's Gambit

85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99

Excellent chess game with attitude and personality.

### Magic Candle II

80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99

Good as an RPG, excellent as a budget.

### NFL Coaches Club Football

70) MicroProse – Sport £44.99

A good attempt that's let down by the rather poor passing system.



# BUYERS' GUIDE



IndyCar Racing: great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

## Privateer

(75) Origin - Flight Sim £49.99  
Wing Commander fans will love this. X-Wing fans won't. It's as simple as that.

## Sim Farm

(79) Maxis - Strategy £34.99  
Quite good if you like farming, but not as good as Sim City.

## Steel Thunder

(60) Hit Squad - Arcade £12.99  
Reasonable fun, but not one you'd come back to.

## Street Fighter II

(81: Recommended) US Gold - Beat 'Em Up - £29.99  
Addictive and violent but the cross over to the PC hindered unless you invest in a game pad.

## Strike Commander: Tactical Operations

(80: Recommended) Origin - Flight Sim £19.99  
Essential if you're determined to get the most out of Strike Commander.

## V for Victory 4: Gold-Juno-Sword

(78) Three-Sixty Pacific £34.99  
It's still the best computer wargames system but it needs a shot in the arm... or leg... or both even.

## When Two Worlds War

(63) Impressions - Wargame £34.99  
An unattractive attempt at a strategy wargame that fails to add anything new - including excitement. Give us dice and counters any day...

## Knights Of The Sky

(79) Kixx - Strategy £16.99  
A game that's well worth buying for the two-player option alone.

## Links Championship Course: Innisbrook

(75) US Gold - Sport £24.99  
If you really want another Links course, then this is one.

## Links

(80: Recommended) Kixx - Sport £16.99  
An excellent golf game for anyone with a less than ninja PC.

## Lords Of Power

(85: Recommended) Ubisoft - Strategy £39.99  
A first class simulation which you would be mad not to buy.

## Network Q RAC Rally 2

(80: Recommended) Europress Software - Driving £34.99  
A rather good addition to the current crop of driving games, if you can stand the opponent's amazing skills.

## Newsweek Interactive

(30) The Software Business - General Interest £39.99  
Over-priced, over-patronising and over here.

## Night Shift

(70) Kixx - £12.99  
A suitably frantic and frustrating puzzler.

## Oceans Below

(70) The Software Business - Edutainment £39.99  
Initially interesting, but unfortunately the novelty all too soon wears off. Strictly for scuba diving fans.

## Protostar (CD)

(80: Recommended) Accolade - Space Sim £39.99  
Absorbing, well designed and, if you can forgive its weaker moments, it'll keep you busy for ages.

## Return To Zork (CD)

(90: Classic) Activision - Adventure £49.99  
Bad news for text-adventure purists who thought that Zork was sacred. Hal

## Return To Zork

(90: Classic) Activision - Adventure £45.99  
A highly imaginative and enjoyable adventure game with some very clever knobs attached.

## Shadowcaster

(66) Electronic Arts - Role-Playing Game £44.99  
Neither Wolfenstein nor Underworld. And not much in-between.

## Speed Racer

(49) Accolade - Racing £39.99  
Nice intro, shame about the game.

## Star Trek: Judgement Rites

(79) Interplay - Adventure £44.99  
The stories are poetic and the variety of gameplay is "fascinating" but it is not the best flight sim or adventure game.

## Strike Squad

(25) Empire - Strategy £39.99  
Just turn the page and get on with enjoying life, okay?

## The Blue And The Gray

(78) Impressions - Wargame £39.99  
Dedicated blood 'n' guts fans will find it a little simplistic, but it's a great all-round wargame with hidden depths and long term playability.

## The Even More Incredible Machine

(89: Recommended) Dynamix £39.99  
If you've never played The Incredible Machine now's the time to start.

## World Class Rugby

(60) Audiogenic - Sport £14.99  
Not really worth the waggle.

## World War Two: Battles Of The South Pacific

(62) Mirage - Strategy/Action £44.99  
Innovative mix of naval strategy and action. The gameplay doesn't quite live up to expectations -

## Issue 11 - February 1994

### Advantage Tennis

(55) Infogrames - Sport £35.99  
Unexciting tennis game that lacks punch.

### Alone In The Dark 2

(97: Classic) Infogrames - Adventure - £39.99  
Absolutely Brilliant! What the PC was made for.

### Alone in the Dark (CD)

(92: Classic) Infogrames - Adventure £44.99  
Still the best thing since sliced bread. Buy it.

### B-Wing

(72) US Gold - Space Sim £19.99  
Your sister either fancied Han Solo or Luke Skywalker. You'll either fancy B-Wing or, er, something else.

### Capitol Hill (CD)

(75) Software Toolworks - Edutainment £39.99  
Comprehensive introduction to American politics

### Chessmaster 4000 Turbo

(90: Classic) Mindscape - Chess £34.99  
Tough opponent: gentle teacher.

### Critical Path (CD)

(72) Media Vision - Adventure £49.99  
Slick and atmospheric but way too short.

### Dungeon Hack

(62)SSI - Role-Playing Game £39.99  
Not enough there. Not enough design options. Not enough gameplay. Very hardened and grizzled role-players only.

### Fire And Ice

(75) Renegade - Platform Game £29.99  
A fun, but difficult game, marred only by an over-inflated price and ridiculous copy protection.

### Flight Sim Toolkit

(80: Recommended) Domark - Simulation £49.99  
Recommended, but only if you find Stunt Island limiting. It can be very heavy going.

### Global Domination

(65) Impressions - Strategy £39.99  
Slick, addictive strategy game but it presents no long term challenge.

### Goblins 3

(75) Coktel Vision - Puzzle Game £39.99  
Good for beginners and a pleasant diversion for seasoned adventurers.

### Kingmaker

(88: Recommended) US Gold - Board Game £37.99  
Without doubt the best board game conversion for a long, long time.

### Magic Boy

(60) Empire - Platform Game £25.99  
Not very "magic" at all.

### Master of Orion

(72) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99  
A good one for all the accountants out there.

### Rebel Assault

(93: Classic) LucasArts - Shoot 'Em Up £49.99  
It's Star Wars. It's also the most important game to date.

### Striker

(55) Elite - Sport £29.99  
Another Paul Bodin penalty of the gamesplaying world.

### Subwar 2050

(86: Recommended) MicroProse - Simulation £44.99  
Easily the best "fun" simulation that MicroProse has produced.

### The Labyrinth Of Time

(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Adventure £39.99  
Beautiful, alluring, a touch slow and a little fussy. A quite superb adventure though.

### The Terminator Rampage

(75) Bethesda Softworks - Arcade £39.99  
Okay, but once you've seen Doom, you'll laugh in Rampage's face and spill its pint.

### VGA Planets

(70) PAW PBM - Role-Playing Game £24.99  
A rather interesting type of role-playing game that takes some time, but is generally worth the wait.

## Issue 12 - March 1994

### Campaign

(52) Empire - Strategy £39.99  
Dim-witted attempt at simulating armoured action - too buggy to recommend, despite colourful graphics and arcade sequences.

### Championship Manager '94

(80: Recommended) Domark - Sport £29.99  
It's still the best (just).

### Championship Manager Italia

(80: Recommended) Domark - Sport £29.99  
It's the best too, just with a few more noughts at the end of the transfer figures.

### Combat Classics 2

(50) Empire - Flight Sim Compendium £34.99  
Sadly, this compilation contains one classic and two rather second-rate duds.

### Companions Of Xanth

(73) Accolade - Adventure £39.99  
Awful puns. Questionable Humour. Very Monkey Island-esque. What more could you want from an adventure?

## Cyber Race

(64) Cyberdreams - Racing £44.99  
Mildly entertaining for a quick blast, but that's about it.

## Fury Of The Furies

(85: Recommended) Mindscape - Puzzle/Platform Game £39.99

A riveting platform puzzler, but not for the easily frustrated.

## Gabriel Knight

(92: Classic) Sierra On-Line - Adventure £39.99  
Brilliant and frightening offering from Sierra.

## Genesis

(83: Recommended) Mindscape - Strategy £34.99  
A little bit of Populous, a little bit of Civilisation.

## Hand Of Fate

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment Adventure £39.99

You've got to hand it to Westwood, this is a bit of a stunner.

## Heirs To The Throne

(43) Mirage - Strategy £44.99

If I got this kind of quality from a PC game I'd be blinking well complain.

## Indianapolis 500

(65) Hit Squad - Driving £14.99

A once-great giant succumbs to the ravages of time.

## Leisure Suit Larry 6

(75) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Adventure £35.99  
The best Larry yet; but he's getting way past his sell-by date.

## Little Devil

(90: Classic) Gremlin Graphics - Puzzle Game £39.99  
An excellent puzzle game with wit and flair.

## Police Quest 4: Open Season

(78) Sierra On-Line - Adventure £39.99  
A thoroughly professional job for those who can think and click at the same time.

## Premier Challenge

(78) Tai Chi - Sport £24.99  
Design your own game. Boost this score.

## Premier Manager 2

(65) Gremlin Graphics - Sport £34.99  
It's better, but still too obsessed with interior decorating for my liking.

## Shadow Of Darkness

(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line - Adventure £39.99  
A compelling storyline makes up for the dull battle scenes.

## The Incredible Toons

(82: Recommended) Dynamix - Puzzle Game £39.99  
Zany, silly and highly addictive.

## Issue 13 - April 1994

### Archon Ultra

(78) US Gold - Strategy £39.99  
More beat 'em up than strategy.

### Beneath A Steel Sky

(63: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Flight Sim £39.99

Graphically good and pleasingly puzzling jaunt that you'll feel like returning to.

### Conspiracy

(67) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Adventure £44.99  
Takes all the fun out of Ruskie bashing.

### D-Day

(38) US Gold - Wargame £35.99  
D-Day lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.

### Daemonsgate

(45) Gametek - Role-Playing Game £29.99  
Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.

### Doom

(96: Classic) ID Software - Arcade £34.99  
The best arcade game and the best multi-player game ever. Doom is the best.

### Hired Guns

(77) Psygnosis - Role-Playing Game £44.99  
Ishtar 2 with robots.

### Hot Sound And Vision

(85: Recommended) Interplay - General Interest £44.99  
An outstanding collection.

### Interplay's 10 Year Anthology

(85: Recommended) Interplay - Compendium £49.99  
A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.

### Micro Machines

(70) Codemasters - Arcade £29.99  
A good two-player game (if you have a decent PC).

### Mortal Kombat

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Beat 'Em Up £29.99

Not as good as the SNES Street Fighter II, but the best on the PC.

### Nomad

(78) Gametek - Space Strategy £29.99  
Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.

### Pinball Fantasies

(80: Recommended) 21st Century Entertainment - Pinball Game £37.95

The meanest machine of them all and a worthy successor to the original Pinball Dreams.

## Issue 10 - January 1994

### 8 Ball Deluxe

(75) Supervision - Pinball Game £34.99  
Technically, the best pinball game there is, but there's not enough of it for the price.

### 20th Century Almanac

(30) The Software Business - General Interest £74.99  
Outrageous price for a poor substitute for a hardback encyclopaedia.

### Aces Over Europe

(78) Dynamix - Flight Sim £44.99  
It's better than Aces Of The Pacific, but so it should be. Dated, but still very playable.

### Air Combat Classics

(60) US Gold - Flight Sim £45.99  
Shows just how far things have progressed in five years.

### Alien Breed

(75) Team 17 - Shoot 'Em Up £29.99  
Enjoyable, undemanding shoot 'em up that comes into its own in two-player mode.

### Dracula Unleashed

(85: Recommended) Mindscape - Adventure £39.99  
Classy adventure that you can really get your teeth into.

### Dreamlands

(72) Daze Marketing - Compendium £29.99  
The ideas and graphics are interesting, the gameplay, however, isn't.

### Goblins 2

(67) Coktel Vision - Puzzle Game £44.99  
Zany puzzle game, frustrating at times but mostly good fun.

### IndyCar Racing

(93: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Driving £44.99

The new definitive driving game. And it comes with a free moustache.

### Innocent Until Caught

(84: Recommended) Psygnosis - Adventure £44.99  
Well worth nicking. Ho ho.

### Jurassic Park

(73) Ocean - Adventure £34.99  
Despite some irritating flaws, an atmospheric and addictive game.





yst: "great graphics, what gameplay?" disease claims another hapless victim.

## Union

(2: Recommended) Grand Slam - Strategy £TBA  
Union has something for everyone.

## City 2000

(2: Classic) Maxis - Strategy £39.99

Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.

## Star Trek: 25th Anniversary

(6: Recommended) Interplay - Adventure £49.99

Game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.

## Strike Commander (CD)

(6: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £49.99

Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.

## The Complete UMS

(8) Mirage - Strategy £44.99

Both classics in their day, the two UMS games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.

## The Lawnmower Man

(7) Sales Curve Interactive - Arcade £54.99

Excellent presentation. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.

## Winter Olympics

(4) US Gold - Sport £42.99

As its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.

## Wizard

(3) Psygnosis - Role-Playing Game £44.99

Good stepping stone into the land of RPGs.

## Issue 14 - May 1994

### Transport Pilot (CD)

(0) RC Simulations - Simulation £79.95

For my idea of fun but a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.

### Trilines

(0) Kompart (UK) Ltd - Strategy £39.99

Gly, fiddly and totally boring.

### Trilena: The Elder Scrolls

(2) Bethesda Softworks - Role-Playing Game £45.99

Is disappointing really.

### ward Winner Gold Edition

(8: Recommended) Empire - Arcade £34.99

Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!

### Little Isle 2

(1: Classic) Blue Byte - Strategy £54.99

Without a shadow of a doubt, the strategy game

of the year.

### Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)

(95: Classic) Interplay - Strategy - £39.99

A stunning improvement of an already classic game.

### Canon Fodder

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.

### CD-ROM Challenge Pack

(75) Software Toolworks - Compendium £39.99

Reasonable good compilation, but there are better ones around.

### Championship Manager For Windows

(79) Domark - Sport £29.99

A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.

### D/Generation

(85: Recommended) Mindscape - Adventure £19.99

Probably the best game that Windows users have ever played.

### Excellent Games

(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly - Various £39.99

Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including Populous 2, Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker, Car And Driver and Robocod.

### Fantastic Dizzy

(50) Codemasters - Platform Game £9.99

Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.

### Gabriel Knight (CD)

(90: Classic)

Sierra On-Line - Adventure £44.99

Brooding, atmospheric thriller.

### In Extremis

(67) US Gold - Arcade £37.99

You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!

### Johnny Quest

(12) Software Business - Arcade/Adventure £29.99

Can basically be summed up in one word.

### Megarace

(65) Mindscape - Racing £39.99

A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.

### Merchant Prince

(82: Recommended) Mirage - Strategy £44.99

Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance you'll be hooked.

### Microcosm

(70) Psygnosis - Shoot 'Em Up £49.99

Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down by limited gameplay.

### NFL Pro League Football

(50) Digital Integration - Sport £39.99

As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.

### Privateer: Righteous Fire

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Add-On £19.99

Privateer fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.

### Seawolf

(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Simulation £44.99

A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.

### Starlord

(70) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99

It could have been excellent. Could have been. Damn!

### The Patrician (CD)

(70) Daze Marketing - Strategy £39.99

A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.

### The Red Crystal

(43) Mirage - Role-Playing Game £44.99

Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.

### Unnecessary Roughness

(66) Accolade - Sport £39.99

Best described as "alright", it's as good as most American footy sims.

## Issue 15 - June 1994

### Bloodnet

(75) MicroProse - Role-Playing Game £39.99

Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.

### Carriers At War II

(63) Electronic Arts - Strategy £44.99

For die-hard strategy aficionados.

### Darkseed

(90: Classic) Cyberdreams - Adventure £44.99

If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the Darkseed affair.

### Diggers

(40) Millennium - Puzzle Game £34.99

Mind-numbingly tedious.

### Disney Animation Studio

(75) Infogrames - General Interest £99.99

More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!

### Dragonsphere

(69) MicroProse - Adventure £39.99

A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.

### Evasive Action

(40) Mindscape - Simulation £34.99

So close, but more bugs than Watergate.

### F1

(40) Domark - Sport £29.99

The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.

### Fleet Defender

(86: Recommended) MicroProse - Flight Sim £44.99

Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.

### Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop

(75) Empire - General Interest £49.99

Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.

### Hornet Naval Strike Fighter

(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte - Flight Sim £TBA

As that well known saying goes: "If you like Falcon 3, you'll just love Hornet".

### Myst

(67) Electronic Arts - Adventure £44.99

Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.

### Pacific Strike

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £49.99

Miles better than Strike Commander but requires a state-of-the-art, ninja PC.

### Pagan: Ultima VII

(78) Electronic Arts - Role-Playing Game £44.99

Without doubt a love/hate relationship for Ultima purists.

### Ravenloft

(78) US Gold - Role-Playing Game £45.99

am & Max: The clue's inside the cat. Rip it's head off (Sick, or what?)



Star Trek 25th Anniversary: Oh no! It's the alien cornettos!



## Directory For Buyers

21st Century Entertainment

0235 851533

Accolade 081 877 0880

Adventuresoft 021 625 3377

Bullfrog 0483 579399

Codemasters 0926 814132

Core Design 0332 297797

Daze Marketing 071 328 2762

Digital Integration 0276 684044

Domark 081 780 2222

Dynamix 0734 303322

Electronic Arts 0753 549442

Empire 081 343 7337

Gametek 0753 553445

Grand Slam 081 680 7041

Gremlin Graphics 0742 753423

Hit Squad 061 832 6633

ICE 0453 756993

Impressions 071 371 2133

Infogrames 071 738 8199

Interplay 0235 821666

Kixx 021 606 1800

Kompart (UK) Ltd 0727 868005

Krisalis 0709 372290

LucasArts 081 960 2255

Maxis 071 490 2333

Merit Software 091 385 7755

Microids 071 328 2762

MicroProse 0454 326532

Millennium 0223 844894

Mindscape 0444 246333

Novalogic 071 607 9707

Ocean 061 832 6633

Origin 0753 549442

Oxford Softworks 0993 823463

Psygnosis 051 709 5755

Renegade 071 481 9214

Sierra On-Line 0734 303322

Simarils 071 328 2762

Spectrum Holobyte 0454 326532

SSI 0444 246333

Team 17 0924 201846

Titus 071 700 2119

Time Warner 0604 602800

Ubisoft 081 941 4004

US Gold 021 606 1800

Virgin 081 960 9900

Zeppelin Games 091 385 7755



# BUYERS' GUIDE



**TIE Fighter:** Who wants to be noncey Luke Skywalker when you can be mates with big Darth?

SSI has finally got "real" and produced a playable and accessible RPG.

## Red Hell

(60) Cyberdreams - Adventure £39.99

The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.

## RedShift

(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd - General Interest £89.00

A stunning program which will be hard to beat.

## Sabre Team

(60) Krisalis - Strategy £29.99

This has all been done before, and done much better as well.

## Shadowcaster

(70) Electronic Arts - Role-Playing Game £39.99

Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.

## Spaceship Warlock

(70) Reactor/Ubisoft - Adventure £44.99

Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.

## TFX

(80: Recommended) Ocean - Simulation £44.99

Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.

## UFO Enemy Unknown

(93: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99

Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.

## Washington DC Scenery

(85: Recommended) Supervision - Flight Sim Add-On £39.99

One of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

## Issue 16 - July 1994

### Castles II

(65) Interplay - Strategy £49.95

Interplay usually releases excellent games - this isn't one of them.

### Comanche (CD)

(90: Classic) Optima - Flight Sim £49.99

Brilliant action-packed helicopter simulation at a great price on CD.

### Companions Of Xanth (CD)

(84: Recommended) Accolade - Role-Playing Game £39.99

Great game on disk. Even better on CD.

### Corridor 7

(55) Gametek - Arcade £19.99

Nothing new or exciting.

### Debut

(85: Recommended) Impressions - Strategy £39.99

An intriguing strategy/sim which boasts both originality and playability.

### Dragon's Lair

(67) Elite Systems - Adventure £39.99

An interactive cartoon that's more "cartoon" than "interactive".

### Eye Of The Storm

(40) Rebellion - Space/Strategy £39.99

Very futuristic, very Elite and very, very crap.

### Great Naval Battles 2

(86: Recommended) US Gold - Simulation £45.99

SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.

### Hand Of Fate (CD)

(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Adventure £49.99

Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.

### Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition

(85: Recommended) Accolade - Sport £19.99

A good golf game at an amazing price.

### Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker

(80: Recommended) Hit Squad - Sport £14.99

Dangerously addictive snooker sim.

### Lucky's Casino Adventure

(60) Mirage - Card Game £44.99

Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.

### Lure Of The Temptress

(55) Hit Squad - Adventure £14.99

Old and fading.

### Power Game 2 (CD)

(70) Activision - Simulation £29.99

Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.

### Robinson's Requiem

(85: Recommended) Daze Marketing - Role-Playing Game £39.99

This is a highly original and addictive "survival sim", which, unfortunately, has some annoying bits.

### Sam And Max Hit The Road

(93: Classic) US Gold - Adventure £45.99

Brilliantly original and a highly humorous jaunt.

### Sim City Classic

(70) Hit Squad - Strategy £16.99

Still a great game but check out Sim City 2000 first.

### Sim City Enhanced

(82: Recommended) Interplay - Strategy £49.99

Sim City's an excellent game but so quid is a bit steep for a few enhancements.

### Sleepwalker

(45) Hit Squad - Platform Game £9.99

Third-rate platformer. Stay well away from it.

### Space Hulk

(87: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Strategy £39.99

Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.

### Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge

(80: Recommended) Accolade - Sport £19.99

Good compilation, great value.

### The Horde

(87: Recommended) US Gold - Strategy/Arcade £44.99

Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.

### The Rock 'N' Roll Years - The '50s

(70) Supervision - General Interest £24.99

Handy for '50s music lovers or as a reference - but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.

### The Settlers

(89: Recommended) Blue Byte - Strategy £39.99

A damn fine, engrossing game.

### Theatre Of War

(70) Hit Squad - Strategy £12.99

Excellent strategy game and it looks cool too.

### UFO

(93: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99

Incredibly addictive strategy game.

### Wembley Rugby League

(66) Audiogenic - Sport £29.99

This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.

### Wolfpack

(60) Optima - Strategy £29.99

Disappointingly average.

### World Cup Challenge

(48) Winsport - Sport £29.95

Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

### Issue 17 - August 1994

### 1942: Pacific Air War

(89: Recommended) MicroProse - Flight Sim £44.99

Two great games - Carrier Battles and Task Force 1942 - in one package. It's a winner!

### AI Quadim: The Gentle's Curse

(40) US Gold/SSI - Role-Playing Game £35.99

The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.

### Burntime

(43) Max Design - Strategy £39.99

Hey, it's just like being there.

## Cool Spot

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Platform Game £29.99

Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-up!

## Delta V

(64) Bethesda Softworks - Shoot 'Em Up £45.99

Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.

## Dinosaur Detective Agency

(42) Alternative Software - Platform Game £16.99

Cheap - but that's no reason to be cheerful.

## Empire Soccer

(57) Empire - Sport £29.99

Let down by the small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.

## Good To Firm

(50) New Era Software - Sport £29.99

Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.

## International Tennis Open

(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media - Sport £44.99

Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.

## Jack Nicklaus (CD)

(78) Accolade - Sport £16.99

A perfectly serviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on.

## Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)

(0) Mindscape - General Interest £39.99

The most expensive beer mat in the world.

## Overlord

(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Simulation £39.99

An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.

## Pinball Dreams 2

(70) 21st Century Entertainment - Pinball Game £19.99

Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.

## Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye

(88: Recommended) Activision - Puzzle Game £29.99

Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.

## Sherlock Holmes - The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel

(48) Electronic Arts - Adventure £49.99

Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.

## Simon The Sorcerer (CD)

(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd - Adventure £44.99

A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.

## Syndicate (CD)

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts - Strategy £39.99

What a game. What a barg.

## Tactical Manager

(75) Black Legend - Sport £34.99

An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.

## Theme Park

(93: Classic) Electronic Arts - Strategy £44.99

A highly inventive "business" sim that's fun, fun, fun all the way. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog.

## Walls Of Rome

(74) Digital Integration - Strategy £16.99

Good, if thin, fun.

## World Cup USA '94

(78) US Gold - Sport £32.99

Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.

## Zool 2

(82: Recommended) Millennium - Platform £34.99

As they say, if you liked Zool, you'll love this.

Theme Park: Sim City eat your heart out.



## Issue 18 - September 1994

### Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)

(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Adventure £39.99

Comic book-style adventure with an excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.

### D-Day

(40) Impressions - War Game £39.99

A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a war game without many redeeming features.

### FIFA International Soccer

(70) Electronic Arts - Sport £39.99

Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.

### Harpoon II

(70) Electronic Arts - Simulation £44.99

Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always sloooooow.

### Inherit The Earth - Quest For The Orb

(72) US Gold - Adventure £39.99

A well-thought out gentle little brain teaser for those who fancy a "sensible" game.

### International Sensible Soccer

(78) Renegade - Sport £19.99

One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.

### Lili Divil (CD)

(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics - Adventure £34.99

Excellent, original and addictive.

### Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes

(35) Megatech - Beat 'Em Up £39.99

Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.

### On The Ball

(68) Ascon - Sport £34.99

Too many frills, not enough body.

### Outpost

(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line - Strategy £49.99

A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.

### Shadow Of The Comet (CD)

(88: Recommended) Infogrames - Adventure £39.99

A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.

### Soccer Kid

(30) Krisalis - Platform Game £29.99

If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.

### Theatre Of Death

(35) Psygnosis - Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Below average imitation of an above-average game.

### TIE Fighter

(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Space Sim £49.99

Sheer, undiluted quality. Treat yourself to a copy.

## Issue 19 - October 1994

### 74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!

(90: Classic) SSI - Wargame £39.99

Never mind the 50-ton tanks - this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.

### Battle Bugs

(65) Dynamix - Strategy £TBA

A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).

### Dark Legions

(85: Recommended) SSI - Strategy £35.99

Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.

### Heimdall 2

(45) Core - Adventure £39.99

Great game, shame you can't play it.

### Hell Cab

(50) Time Warner - Adventure £49.99



the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.

**HyCar Racing Expansion Pack**  
(95: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – £17.99  
These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).

**Star III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity**  
(91) Simaris – Strategy £39.99  
I'm up *Ishar III* in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.

**Hit Squad** – Adventure £14.99  
Again? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.

**Knock Off 3**  
(91) Anco – Sport £29.99  
Nice features, but gameplay not up to much.

**Manchester United Premier League Champions**  
(91) Krisalis – Sport £29.99  
Irisi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.

**Intel Football**  
(91) Infogrames – Sport £39.99  
The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.

**Ice Quest IV – Open Season**  
(91: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99  
Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.

**Summer Challenge**  
(91) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99  
Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy cheat at, but do you really want another sports sim?

**Lord A Killing Moon**  
(91) Gold – Adventure £59.99  
Games can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.

**King Commander: Armada**  
(91) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99  
Lots of good ideas stuck together but it doesn't hang quite right.

## Issue 20 – November 1994

**Ben Legacy**  
(91: Recommended) Sierra – Strategy £39.99  
Nice strategy thing which is a bit like *Outpost* without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.

**Wings Engine**  
(91: Recommended) Renegade – Arcade £32.99  
Damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty with lots of big guns and silly characters.

**Colonization**  
(91: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99  
Try to imagine *Civilization* with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined colonization.

**Telemania (CD)**  
(91: Recommended) Accolade – Arcade £39.99  
Very competent *Road Rash* 3DO rip-off with vtrly digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.

**Secret Strike**  
(91) Gremlin – Arcade £34.99  
Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.

**Doom II**  
(91: Classic) Virgin Interactive – Arcade £49.99  
The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and new monstrosities. Iss it at your peril.

**Terminator (CD)**  
(91: Recommended) Ocean – Space/Sim £44.99  
Longer awaited game from DID. Lots of big space ships and silly looking aliens. One of the better space combat games.

**A-50 Hawk**  
(91: Recommended) Virgin – Simulation £39.99  
Without a doubt the very best helicopter simulator money can buy. Something for the copeller heads out there.

**HL Hockey 95 (CD)**  
(91: Classic) EA – Sports/Arcade £34.99  
A new version of the top-down scrolly, ice hockey game from EA. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.

**Discworld: Just possibly one of the best point'n'click adventure game ever.**



**PGA 486 (CD)**  
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sports £44.99  
Gorgeous looking, solid playing, tasty little golf game. One of the best on the PC so far.

**Pinball Dreams CD**  
(70) 21st Century – Arcade £39.99  
Eight wonderfully designed, smoothly scrolling pinball tables. Why is it on CD? 'Cause there are lots of pointless rendered bits, that's why.

**System Shock**  
(95: Classic) EA/Origin – RPG £44.99  
Pant-wettingly fantastic, cyberpunk, RPG thing. All hail *System Shock*, that shalt be king hereafter (until *System Shock II* comes out, that is).

## Issue 21 – December 1994

**Alone in the Dark II CD**  
(93: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99  
A sequel that is noticeably better than the original and with some serious CD enhancements. What a refreshing change.

**Dawn Patrol**  
(80: Recommended) Empire – Flight simulation £44.99  
A gorgeous looking SVCA WWI flight sim with a bit of a different idea behind it... it's an interactive book apparently.

**Dreamweb**  
(74) Empire – RPG £44.99  
Cyberpunk rpg with lots of violence and a shaggy scene that has now become infamous.

**Ecstasica**  
(93: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99  
An utterly brilliant *Alone in the Dark*-like with ellipsoid-generated characters and lots of pert buttocks.

**FIFA CD**  
(76) Electronic Arts – Sports £39.99  
A smart-looking footy game that just falls short of being an absolute belter.

**Little Big Adventure**  
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99  
A truly amazing adventure with pretty graphics and weird French gameplay. Gobsnacking.

**Magic Carpet**  
(96: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'em up £44.99  
The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and new monstrosities. Miss it at your peril.

**Project X**  
(76) Team 17 – Shoot 'em up £19.99  
A very competent and nicely low-priced little shoot 'em up.

**Rise of the Robots**  
(88: Recommended) Mirage – Beat 'em up £44.99  
Possibly the best beat 'em up on the PC so far with some excellent rendered sprites.

**Space Simulator**  
(75) Microsoft – Simulator £39.99  
A huge simulation of man's quest for space that is a little too ambitious for its own good.

**Star Crusader**  
(80) Gametech – Shoot 'em up £39.99  
Basically this is a poor man's *Wing Commander* with some nice CD bits.

**Transport Tycoon**  
(94: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99  
One of the best strategy games around and a more than worthy sequel to *Railroad Tycoon*.

**Total Carnage**  
(74) ICE – Shoot 'em up £27.99  
Good challenging fun and a more than competent conversion of the original arcade machine.

## Issue 22 – January 1995

**Aces of the Deep**  
(90: Classic) Dynamix/Sierra – £39.99  
The graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.

**All New World of Lemmings**  
(78) Digital Integration – £39.99  
If you like all the other Lemmings games, you'll like this one too.

**Armored Fist**  
(86: Recommended) US Gold/Novologic £44.99  
Comanche on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what I mean.

**Creature Shock**  
(78) Virgin – £49.99  
An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.

**CyberWar**  
(55) SCI – £49.99  
It looks amazing. The gameplay isn't.

**Dark Sun II**  
(80: Recommended) Mindscape – £44.99  
Love it for its brains not for its looks.

**Discworld**  
(96: Classic) Psygnosis – £49.99  
Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.

**Front Page Sports Baseball**  
(85: Recommended) Sierra – £44.99

**Alone in the Dark 3**  
(95 – Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99  
The mega-stonkingly weird and wonderful final chapter in the *Alone in the Dark* trilogy.

**Cannon Fodder 2**  
(74) Virgin Interactive – Arcade/Strategy £34.99  
Just more of the same or is *Cannon Fodder 2* a significant improvement? Sensible returns with more "fun with a gun".

**Commander Blood**  
(81 – Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99  
It's French, and guess what? It's weird. Very weird. We try not to get at them for it... but this is just plain mad.

**Cyberia**  
(80 – Recommended) Interplay – Adventure/Shoot 'em up £49.99  
A contender for the "Best-looking game of 1994" award. Tastier than treacle pudding with lashings of thick custard, and almost certainly better than *Rebel Assault*.

**Dragon Lore**  
(81 – Mindscape) Interplay – Adventure £44.99  
Cryo's epic multi-CD graphic adventure finally arrives. Is it just more French weirdness or is it actually a decent game?

**Hammer of the Gods**  
(77) US Gold – Strategy £TB  
Nordic domination and general Euro-bashing in this simple but addictive strategy war sim from New World Computing.

**Kyrandia 3**  
(87 – Recommended) Virgin – Adventure £44.99  
Westwood's *Fables and Fiends* series makes it to number three, and this time you get to play the bad guy!

**Lion King**  
(71) Virgin – Platform game £29.99  
The smash-hit movie turns into a reasonable-ish platform game. Pretend your PC is a Mega Drive.

**NASCAR Racing**  
(84 – Recommended) Virgin – Racing Sim £44.99  
Payrus follows up *IndyCar* with the popular American sport of driving round and round in circles.

**Noctropolis**  
(79) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99  
Electronic Arts goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.



Alone in the Dark 3: More Carnby, cobwebbs, murder, mystery and mayhem.

It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.

**Klik 'n' Play**  
(88: Recommended) Europress – £39.99  
Neat intuitive, and loads of fun.

**Novastorm**  
(40) Psygnosis – £44.99  
Repeat ad nauseam: "Pretty graphics doth not a game make."

**Power Drive**  
(50) US Gold – £39.99  
30 whole points off for no two-player mode. Sod off *Power Drive*.

**Quarantine**  
(80: Recommended) Gametech – £39.99  
An excellent blast and it looks good too.

**Retribution**  
(45) Gremlin Interactive – £39.99  
Not only is it a below average shoot 'em up, it has pretensions too.

**US Navy Fighters**  
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – £44.99  
If it had a multi-player facility, I'd give it 100. But it hasn't, so I won't.

**Warcraft**  
(75) Interplay – £39.99  
Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

## Issue 23 – February 1995

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**Noctropolis**  
(79) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99  
Electronic Arts goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.

**Ultimate Body Blows**  
(78) Team 17 – Beat 'em up £29.99  
An Amiga conversion from Team 17. Don't be put off by that, though – it's actually quite good.

**Voyeur**  
(40) Interplay – Adventure £39.99  
Not as pesty as people think. Yes, there are suspenders and braiers in it... but no nudity and no naughtiness (well, not much).

**Wing Commander 3**  
(62) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £59.99  
Four million dollars, Luke Skywalker and a well-known porn actress... a potentially interesting situation if ever there was one.

## Issue 24 – March 1995

**Aladdin**  
(70) Virgin – Arcade £29.99  
He Leaps tall buildings, cuts through baddies with his scimitar and wears pointy slippers. He's Aladdin – who else!

**Dark Forces**  
(95 – Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Action adventure £54.99  
The empire is finally Doom-ed, but is it better than the real thing? We bring you the first review of the game everyone's itching to get their hands on, in a special world exclusive, courtesy of LucasArts and Virgin.

**Doom Clones: Head to Head**  
(55) Merit – Action adventure £39.99  
We put Merit's *Dr. Radiant* up against *Virtuoso* from Elite and run for cover (well, *Doom*, actually).

**Nell: A Cyberpunk Thriller**  
(25) Gametech – Adventure £39.99  
It is: it isn't. If it's really this bad then start praying for forgiveness immediately.

**Kick Off 3: European Challenge**  
(70) Anco – Sport £29.99  
The last Kick Off was an absolute nightmare. Have Anco finally got it together in Europe?

**King's Quest VII**  
(93 – Classic) Sierra – Adventure £44.99  
The latest point and click extravaganza from the Roberta Williams' school of mush-wushy, cutesy-wutesyness.

**Knights of Xentar**  
(10) Megatech – Adventure £49.99  
A plentiful lack of Beat 'em up action strides onto the PC, courtesy of Megatech. Ouch!

**Menzoberranzan**  
(68) Mindscape – RPG £TB  
Not a tasty lozenge that promises to clear your stuffy nose and soothe your sore throat, but a rather ordinary RPG fromSSI.

**Metaltech: Earthsiege**  
(87 – Recommended) Sierra – Simulation £39.99  
Go stomping mad in this spectacular HERC-fest from Sierra. Joust on thing though, why have extravagant HERCs that walk when the terrain is perfectly flat?

**Realms of Arkania: Star Trail**  
(85 – Recommended) US Gold – RPG £44.99  
The sequel to the keenly received *Blade of Destiny* finally makes it onto CD-ROM. Hip, hip...

**SuperKarts**  
(82 – Recommended) Virgin – Action £TB  
The most fun you can have with your bum only an inch off the ground, when wearing a crash helmet and clad in brightly-coloured leather.

**Tie Fighter: Defender of the Empire**  
(73) LucasArts – Space/Action £19.99  
Two new missions and a new ship. What will they think of next?

**Wings of Glory**  
(78) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £TB  
Chocks away as Origin reach for the skies to do battle with the Hun, dastardly chaps with 'aches and every other WWI flight sim ever created.



# 20 GOOD REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE TO PC ZONE

## THE PC ZONE CHART

### TOP 10 HD GAMES

Game	RRP	Comment
1. Premier Manager 3	£34.99	Gremlin's latest football management epic
1. Theme Park	£44.99	Possibly the best resource management game around
3. NASCAR Racing	£39.99	Living proof that Papyrus make the best driving games
4. TIE Fighter	£49.99	Play an Imperial pilot in the best space game ever
5. Discworld	£44.99	One of the best point-and-click adventures around
6. Descent	£39.99	The game that might just knock <i>Doom</i> off the top spot
7. LucasArts x3	£49.99	<i>X-Wing</i> , <i>Imperial Pursuit</i> and <i>B-Wing</i> in special package
8. Rise of the Robots (SVGA)	£45.99	The best beat 'em up on the PC so far
9. System Shock	£44.99	Without a doubt the best 3D RPG around
2. SimCity 2000	£39.99	If you like your games a bit more serious then this is it

### TOP 10 CD GAMES

Game	RRP	Comment
1. Alone in the Dark 3	£49.99	The third, final and best game in the adventure series
2. SimCity 2000	£49.99	One of the best resource management games with extras
3. Theme Park	£44.99	Bullfrog's classic with added flashy bits
4. NASCAR Racing	£39.99	The follow-up to <i>IndyCar</i> , and just as good
5. King Quest VII	£44.99	The Sierra saga continues... in SVGA
6. Wings of Glory	£49.99	Origin's latest RealSpace flight sim... set in WWI
7. Descent	£39.99	The best 3D combat games released so far this year
8. Dawn Patrol	£44.99	WWI combat now with added war songs
9. Rebel Assault	£49.99	The biggest selling CD game ever... <i>Star Wars</i> goes FMV
10. LucasArts x2	£44.99	<i>Day of the Tentacle</i> and <i>The Fate of Atlantis</i> on one disc





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# Bits & PCs

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO: BITS & PCs, PC ZONE, 19 BOLSOVER ST. LONDON W1P 7HJ



**How exactly do you get onto the Internet? What on earth is the matter with games programmers? What to do when you**

**lose your system files and what to do when you've got a 286. Mark Burgess sorts out readers' problems and talks about monitors.**

## Net Price

FIRST I WOULD LIKE to ask about the Internet. I was at the DEC Summer Camp at the University of Ulster (Jordanstown), and during my lunch break I stumbled on another class which was using the Internet. I learned from one of the instructors how to access it and found myself amazed by the potential. I went on many chat lines in America, Sweden and London etc., and found that even I could join in. Now it is Christmas and I haven't been on the Internet since, and I am missing it!

The problem for me is that, if I was to get the modem, I would be limited to E-mail only due to the vast expense of running a modem. I have tried to get a fixed day to do on the Internet at my university, but have failed (sly gits!!!). Is there any way that I could get a fixed bill as I simply couldn't afford the prices of the phone bill? My friends are all getting them, why can't I?

Please print this letter and reply.

**Michael Ardill, Newtonabbey, Co Antrim**

I think that you've got yourself a bit muddled here.

Running a modem is easy - it's the 'phone calls that rack up the bills. If you go on to the Internet, a fixed bill is what you get. I'll explain.

Once you get your modem and you have a telephone line to plug it into, you go to what's called an "Internet provider". This is a firm (like Atlas, CityScape, Direct Connection, Delphi [0171 757 7150] or Demon [0181 371 1234]) that will charge you a certain amount to set up an account - say about £25 - and a monthly or yearly subscription. That will come to about £12 a month or £130 a year (these are all figures for Atlas).

That's the fixed bill, and that's what you pay. Now the telephone account. Get yourself an off-line reader like WigWam (shareware) or Ameol (£45). Once you have that, click on the conferences you want to join and then connect. The computer will download all the messages much faster than you could. All you have to do is to reply to the messages or whatever and then go back on line again. The software will upload your words of wisdom, gratuitous insults - again much faster than you can type.

The beauty of an off-line reader, which you can call an OLR to enhance your Net cred, is that you can spend hours reading through stuff without it costing a bean. In normal circumstances, it will only take about a minute of chargeable 'phone time when you log on and leave it to the OLR to do its stuff. Of course, that's just messages. If you try to download 50 WAD files, you could tie up the 'phone for hours. MB

## DOS pains

LAST YEAR I BOUGHT an IBM clone 486SX PC, 25 MHZ, with 4MB of RAM, 1024KB of video RAM on the Super VGA card, DOS 6.0 and Windows 3.1, together with the Lotus SmartSuite of business programs. The PC has a 240MB hard disk, which I have doubled up with Double Space. This year I added a Creative Labs SoundBlaster 16 and CD-ROM drive and I am about to buy a further 4MB of RAM, with possibly by a maths co-processor.

We haven't been excessive games purchasers, now having about 20 games on disk and seven on CD-ROM, but whereas running the business programs under Windows is a doddle, setting up games to run in DOS is a real pain in the bottom. They all want the absolute maximum DOS memory possible, and they all have different requirements from one another. I have used the DOS MEMAKER utility with multiple CONFIG.SYS files to load as much as possible, high in every situation, but I find that to run every game successfully I need far too many alternatives, for example:

Runs under Windows?	yes/no
Uses XMS?	yes/no
Uses EMS?	yes/no
Works with HIMEM.SYS?	yes/no
Works with the updated Soundblaster 16 drivers supplied with Myst?	yes/no
Works only with the original Soundblaster 16 drivers?	yes/no
Uses the CD-ROM Drive?	yes/no

It really annoys me that virtually all games' installation instructions now advise making a boot disk. I don't want a box of diskettes that I have to flip through to choose the right one before I can switch on my PC. Also the most common PC viruses are boot sector infectors, I hate the idea of knowingly booting up my PC from a diskette!

Why can't developers take into account the real-life configurations their customers have, and write the games to suit those, instead of forcing them to have a different CONFIG.SYS for every game?

It seems to me that what we need are more games that run under Windows in Enhanced Mode: could WIN G be the answer? (Mind you, when I installed Myst it updated the SoundBlaster drivers, including adding a new one, and stopped half of our DOS games from working!)

How do you see games for the PC going when Windows '95 comes out? Word is that Microsoft will

encourage vendors to bundle it with PCs, and want to stop shipping DOS 6.x/Windows 3.1 after three months of the launch, so a lot of new PC users will have Windows '95 as their only operating system.

I can't see many of the games that I've got today working then!

**Alan Fraser, Macclesfield, Cheshire**

I know it's a problem but it's not really the fault of the games designers. Think back to the early days of personal computing, when games were written for the Sinclair Spectrum or the Commodore 64. The people who wrote the games knew exactly which chips were inside the machines and how they worked. They knew how much memory was there and how it was set up. There were no surprises (apart from joystick interfaces with the Spectrum).

Now look at an IBM or clone PC. Outside of an office with networked workstations, I doubt if any two are set up in exactly the same way. More importantly, there is a bewildering number of permutations of memory, video chips and peripherals. The computer I'm using to type this is used almost exclusively for Microsoft Office, so its configured for that. The one on the desk next door has a CD-ROM drive, a modem the one next to that has the same plus a scanner.

A games designer doesn't even know what processor you are using, and still less, whether you have 4 or 8 Megs of RAM or a Trident or a Cirrus chipset. They just have to make a compromise between the machine that will show the game to its best advantage and the machine they expect most people to have. Because most games are written in the US, they assume that most people will have fairly expensive, high-end computers - the prices are lower over there and the wages much higher.

Because the designer has no idea how your memory is set up, or how many drivers you have, the simplest solution is to get a game to make a boot disk, then you know exactly what the set up is. At least that's the only sensible and quick DOS solution. The other DOS solution is to use DOS extenders - like on Doom and IndyCar. Such games "take over" the operating system and couldn't care less how your memory is configured because they have their own routines for using memory just how they like.

Windows is terrible with games. It wasn't designed for them. It was written to make any of its application use printers and files seamlessly, and for every application to have the same controls for the same thing - ALT "F" and O for "open file", for instance.

Of course, it would be pretty excellent to have a bit of Windows that ran all games seamlessly, with the same controls, but I can't see it happening. You can see the similarities between a word processor and a spreadsheet but what have Zool and Aces over Europe got in common? They have vastly different controls and completely different ways of writing to the screen.

The WIN G scene has gone very quiet. I think Microsoft is just relying on Windows '95 to run all games in a DOS window. In other words, the problem is going to be ignored until it goes away.

In the meantime, Quarterdeck, who make the memory management software QEMM, have produced a package



# What is it with... Monitors?

People put a lot of time into choosing the processor and the amount of memory they want or can afford. They know all about hard disks and caching. They spend day after day researching which sound card to buy. But hardly anyone bothers about the monitor.

This is bizarre when you think about it because the monitor is the main way your computer communicates with you. And you can play games without a joystick or a sound card, but you can't even know whether your computer is working without a monitor.

The problem is that you get very little choice in the matter. Unless you've made a conscious decision to upgrade to a 17", you're still using the one that came with your computer. However, you should take

time to understand what it does, if only to prevent you from blaming something else.

A monitor basically consists of a CRT (Cathode Ray Tube) and electron guns to write on its phosphor coating. In a colour monitor there are three guns, one each for blue, green and red. It's like a television, only without the tuning circuitry. The difference is that a computer monitor will produce pictures at a higher resolution than your TV will. This is down to the signals rather than the CRT itself. Standard VGA is made up of 640 x 480 pixels or dots. Super VGA is 800 x 600 and the finest resolution in general use is 1,024 x 768.

On a standard 14" monitor (screen size is measured diagonally, like TVs – it makes them seem bigger) Super VGA means about 72 dots per inch. This is quite a comfortable figure. If you want to work at 1,024 x 768 for any length of time, then a 17" will give you more or less the same number of dots per inch and viewing comfort.

Each pixel is made up of a group of three phosphors – one for each of the colours. The closer together these three are, the better. The distance between them

is known as the dot pitch – note that this is not a measure of how far apart the pixels are – and 0.28mm is a good figure.

The other thing to consider about a monitor's display is whether the resolution you want is interlaced or non-interlaced. The problems with a high resolution screen is that the more lines that have to be scanned horizontally, the faster the gun has to move down to update (or "refresh") the picture. This combination of horizontal and vertical frequency (time to write the pixels in a line "x" time to move down to the next line to be written) is called the bandwidth.

When the bandwidth got very high, IBM brought in a solution with its 8514/A standard. This only refreshed half the vertical lines on any one scan, doing the other half on the next pass. It relied on human's persistence of vision. A display that updates half the lines with every pass is called interlaced. Blow that, you might think, I want a monitor that draws all the lines in order. Starting at the top and working its way down. This is known as a non-interlaced scan and, in fact, you need it for resolutions above 800 x 600.

The reason is that, at lower resolutions,

your eye (or rather your brain) "fills in" the fading parts of the screen and gives a uniform picture – this is to do with the persistence of vision again. The problem with interlaced displays is that, at high resolutions, the gun assembly takes so long to get to the bottom of the screen that you notice the fading and the whole picture seems to flicker. The slow fading at the top of the image in a non-interlaced display isn't so noticeable.

Onto the last technical term: refresh rate. This is the speed at which the screen is redrawn. To put it crudely, the higher the refresh rate, the less likely you are to notice the screen flickering. The word notice is important because all of them do – it's the way the technology works. So a refresh rate of 75Hz means that the picture will be redrawn – or half of it in an interlaced monitor – 75 times a second. Your television flickers about 60 times a second, so any figure in the 70s is good. For high resolutions, such as 1,024 x 768, you need at least 75Hz. Of course, your graphics card must be up to providing such resolution and refresh rates – the monitor can't display what it isn't given.

help us all while we're waiting for the problem to go away. Game Runner (£45) is supposed to be able to do away with the "not enough base memory" message forever. It also comes with a neat utility that speeds up your hard drive with software caching. Quarterdeck are on 245 496699. MB

## More Corruption

HELP! I am getting really frustrated with my system at the moment.

I had a problem with an anti-virus toolkit which found viruses in my WIN.COM, MOUSE.COM, COMMAND.COM and other files (it was the Cascade 1701 virus) and then deleted them.

It also sabotaged my CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files. Being my lazy self, I sent the desktop unit back to the shop that I had bought it from and they stored my CONFIG.SYS, COMMAND.COM and AUTOEXEC.BAT files, but left numerous DOS and Windows files as they were and then had the audacity to then charged me 15 quid.

I am unable to use a text editor to find a solution. I tried to use a boot disk that I had created before all these events, but all I got was a message saying I could not boot from this disk and would have to switch off and start again. When I rebooted, I was locked out of DOS (version 5 incidentally) without any Windows directory or "origin" files. I'm sick of having to pay to sort these kinds of problems out, help me please!

Will I need to fully reinstall Windows and DOS? I had some really important files – namely Rex Nebula, F29 Retaliator, Jimmy Whites and the like.

All suggestions are welcome. I worship your guru like wisdom, deep in the chasms full of knowledge. Oh, by the way, I don't have any manuals whatsoever. Never did have.

D Patel, West Bromwich, West Midlands

You've got an aggressive anti-virus program if it deletes rather than cleans. Cascade is an old virus and not that difficult to purge. I think your shop needs to learn a bit about looking after its customers as well. It looks like they've omitted crucial files or tried to use files from a different DOS version.

The solution is simple and will take up about a half hour or so. You've mentioned it yourself: just reinstall DOS and Windows from scratch. Start with the MS-DOS Setup disk (number one) and boot up the machine with it in your floppy drive. Then follow the on-screen instructions. Once you've done that, delete your old Windows directory and re-install Windows.

Perform a quick virus scan and off you go. Your games directories should still be intact. MB

## Your history!

I have three major technical queries to fire at you, so here goes:

I have 2MB of RAM installed on my motherboard. Or so I had been told. But I have just opened up my computer and seen TWO 2MB RAM chips on the motherboard. They are next to each other, and the same size. One has a white label on top of it saying: "AT-M/R1. 2M L" and the other has an orange label saying: "AT-M/R1. 2M H".

Please could you tell me how to configure my system so that it will run with 4MB of RAM. I have enclosed printouts of my CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files just in case they might help a little. The system I have is a Goldstar GT212 (20 MHz 286) and runs MS-DOS 6.0.

Can you name the cheapest possible video card that will turn my Goldstar 1425 Plus VGA monitor into a SVGA one? I don't care if it will take a month to redraw the screen. I just want it cheap. How about the Trident 1MB SVGA for £49?

I do hope you can help with this one as well. Is it

worth getting a co-processor for my 286? Will it speed up flight simulation games or graphically intensive programs noticeably? If it will, then please give me some of your expert advice on where to get it from and what sort of price it will be. I have not seen any advertisements, but perhaps you have.

Thank you for answering my questions.

Nick Fowler, Tollard Royal, Wiltshire

I'm going to try my very best to let you down gently on this one, Nick. First off, those chips you see are not RAM chips. They are, in fact, controllers of some sort. A memory chip is a collection of black chips on a small, printed circuit board that slips in vertically (or more or less so) into a series of 30 or 72 pin slots on the motherboard. In the case of a 286, they are likely to be 30 pin. You are running MS-DOS 6.0 (although your computer cannot take advantage of many of its features) so type "MSD" at the C:> prompt. This should bring up a nifty little program called Microsoft Diagnostics, and it will tell you about the memory you have on board and configured. Brace yourself for 2Mb.

On the second point, another disappointment, I'm afraid. If your monitor is VGA, then it cannot display the more recent SVGA standard. It just can't. And it doesn't matter if you have an SVGA video card – it will be wasted, like putting four star into a DCV.

I really can't think of any flight simulation games, apart from Chuck Yeager, that would conceivably run on a 286 machine. A maths co-processor will only speed up programs that do a lot of mathematical calculations and are designed to use a maths co-processor if present. There's not many of them about; Fractint is one but I doubt if Chuck Yeager is.

A 80287 is the maths co-processor for a 80286, and it should cost about £50. But I am not sure you need one. What you do need is a new computer. Your faithful 286 is history. Sorry. MB ☐



# WORD

# processor

SEND YOUR POST TO: **WORDPROCESSOR, PC ZONE, 19 BOLSOVER ST. LONDON W1P 7HJ**



**You've all gone utterly, utterly and totally off your rockers. We were pretty hard pushed to find a single piece of even remotely**

**sensible mail this month...**

## Sharpened potato

WHILE READING PATRICK MCCARTHY'S *Armored Fist* review in issue 21, I was disgusted to see parallels being drawn between the phrases "Armored Fist" and "painfully large dildo".

In my respected profession I deal with a lot of sensitive and emotionally disturbed individuals, who are easily set off by such disgusting material. I usually have a new issue of your publication in my waiting room, which is read and usually enjoyed by many. One of my patients, who has a rare and dangerous psychological condition, read this particular article and had to be restrained after violently attacking my secretary with a sharpened potato. I feel that this unfortunate woman would not have used this lethal weapon had she not read Mr McCarthy's foul review, and my secretary would have escaped serious mental and physical scarring. I type this letter with my bandaged hand which was slashed with the aforementioned vegetable.

I can only hope that you are very sorry for the damage you have caused and that your ridiculous statement is withdrawn immediately.

**Dr Mark McDonald, East Kilbride, Scotland**

It is a disturbing fact of modern society that poor, unfortunate women can be effected so much by the use of the expression "painfully large dildo". I am sure that when Patrick wrote his review he had no idea that he would disturb anyone. I can assure you that Mr McCarthy has been seriously reprimanded. We felt that it would be strangely fitting to instigate some form of corporal punishment with a variety of under-ripe and unusually-shaped vegetables, and what do you know? The things are bloody lethal, aren't they? The damage you can do with a mis-shapen turnip is quite phenomenal.

## Normal people

I THINK THAT *PC Zone* is, without a doubt, the best mag for this market. However, the reason that I will be taking out a subscription is not just because of this, but because of the attitude and style that the magazine has. For, rather than making me feel that playing a computer game is only the sad pursuit of an "anorak", I no longer believe that it will lead to the end of my social life. It seems that normal people do play computer games.

I have noted with interest a number of letters in recent months that have complained of "gratuitous foul language". It supposedly offends children, and, where they have the courage to say so, the readers themselves. First of all, if they think that ten-year old kids don't use language that is just as bad, then they are either very naive or very stupid. Anyway, it's obvious that this magazine isn't intended to be read by pre-pubescent kids and that's probably why it's so good.

Secondly, if they don't like the language that occasionally occurs in *PC Zone*, I have two suggestions. One is that when you come across a horrid, naughty word, you *Tippex* it out and say a hail Mary. Alternatively, you could just stop reading the mag. Somehow I don't think you'll be missed.

*PC Zone* is doing a great job. It has an individual and endearing style and I love it. If you desperately want to articulate your views on the decline of moral standards, write to someone with real first-hand experience... like a Tory MP.

**Simon Manners, Bristol**

It would be safe to say that nothing in the history of *PC Zone* has something sparked off such a long line of correspondence as the time I used the word "wanker" in *The Editor's Ten Inches*, five months ago. Basically, this is where all this lot started off... we said a couple of rude words in the mag and the mail hasn't stopped. Most people either didn't read the original offending article, or

don't remember it. But whichever way you look at it, it's everyone going.

Although it will annoy many people (and judging from some of the more insulting mail I've been sent, I know it does) I have to say that *PC Zone* isn't aimed at young readers (those under the age of 16). Yes, we're aware that younger people read it, but our target audience is in its mid-20s, and that is the reason that we are so near the knuckle most of the time.

## Jealous, weird and foreign

FIRST OF ALL, let me tell you that you're a really lucky bast... I mean, not everybody gets to pick up lady fan like the one you found back in issue 23. Wow, both me and my younger brother thought she was great.

Anyway, that's all I really wanted to say... as well as the fact that not all foreigners are as weird as those that write to you.

**Name and address completely illegible.**

Thanks. But I'll think you'll find that they are.

## Dark Forces is ace

I'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS opportunity to be as disrespectful as possible to the *Doom* series of games. Now don't take this the wrong way - I am a very keen *Doom* player and have mastered both the standard and *Deathmatch* plays, but there comes time in any game's life where it is simply no longer

## D.I.Y. EURO RAVE-POP DUO!!!

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE:-

- ① CUT OUT FIGURES, GLUE ONTO STURDY CARD. FOLD TABS BACK AND STAND THEM UP.
- ② WRITE A MANTRA-LIKE SONG (USE NO MORE THAN 3 DIFFERENT NOTES). SHOUT THE WORDS "COME ON" AND "DANCE Y'ALL" A LOT.
- ③ SEND LOTS OF MONEY TO RADIO ONE AND MTV.
- ④ COUNT YOUR MONEY. SMILE. RETIRE.





## COSMOPOLITAN COLUMN

### This month's foreigner..

Hi there. Here in the land where most of the Brits think is part of Spain, your mag is quite successful. After you think you can use this letter to clean your hands after a *Doom* massacre, I'd like you to edit my letter if you find anything you don't like - but please keep my intention (we wouldn't dream of changing anything... reprinting a letter verbatim is so much more fun - Ed.)

I'm writing to say something that I don't know if somebody has said before. I'm referring to *Doom* and *Doom II*. But you already have all the letters you could want on this subject, surely? The games are great, but I have a complaint...

A while ago I got hold of the *Quarantine* demo that was on your cover disk, and to my surprise it worked just fine on my 386SX/33. Graphically it's as impressive as *Doom*, it's as violent, and if anything... it's faster. My point then is, why in hell iD Software made a game where the only way to play it on a 386 is in a not-that-larger-than-minuscule window?

**Tiago Nuno Neto. Somewhere that apparently isn't Spain**

*I take it that basically what you're trying to say is that Quarantine is as good as Doom, but works on a lower-powered machine. Well, I suppose that superficially you're right, but if you look more closely at the games you'll find that Doom requires more processor power for a reason.*

*For a start the graphics are far more complex in Doom. Quarantine works on a simple grid system and all of the roads and passageways are set on a square, flat-playing area. Doom uses irregular-shaped objects and playfields to provide a much more realistic playing environment. The net result of this is that iD's games need more processor muscle to keep track of everything. Sure, you can turn the graphic detail down and reduce the size of the window on Doom, but unfortunately you do need a 486 with a decent graphics card to get a good effect.*

### In defence of the French

In recent months I have noticed a disturbing tendency in *PC Zone*. It seems that you have some kind of problem with French people. I have noticed derogatory cartoons, comments in reviews and even an anti-French *Klik & Play* game. Do you really have a problem with the French. Do you honestly feel that you can justify such bigotry?

**P Ranson, Birmingham**  
Yes.

Bridget, you really aren't doing yourself any favours here whatsoever. You do realise that, don't you? We don't get many letters from girls, and to be honest, they do normally tend to register a little more highly on, what we shall, for the sake of this particular argument, call the intelligence scale. We discussed whether or not to give a potted history of *Star Wars* and eventually opted to go with the ultra condensed version, just in case you really are as unaware of the proceedings of the movies as you seem.

So, yes, Darth Vader is Luke and Leia's father, but both children were adopted after they were born (Vader didn't know of their existence). Leia was adopted by Alderaanians and hence became a princess through adoption.

welcome. Over the past few months, wherever you look in a PC or any other computer related magazine there is always something about *Doom*. It's just getting boring and it's high time we talked about something else.

Now then... *Dark Forces*, eh? What a great game. I downloaded a demo from a local BBS. It came in three separate ZIP files, it's 10MB (size is everything) and to be honest, it has to be one of the best demo's I have ever seen. It is spectacular and is surely going to be the thing that people will be talking about from now on.

**Matthew Hardy, Suffolk**

As you probably saw in our exclusive review of *Dark Forces* last month (plug, plug, we're dead brilliant and all that) we can confirm that it is a truly superb game. However, it has to be said that one of the things that makes *Doom* a product with such long-lasting appeal is the fact that it's pretty much open ended. The fact that you can edit virtually every aspect of the game from maps to graphics and sound effects means that you can always get something new from it. Obviously, the gameplay is always going to involve shooting at things, but hey, that's the nature of the beast.

*Dark Forces* is an exceptionally cool game, but somehow I don't think that it will spark off the same sort of following as *Doom*. Obviously, anyone that's into *Star Wars* is going to go gooey over it, but I can't see the "cult" really developing in the same way.

We run some kind of editorial on *Doom* every month and have been doing for the last year. We still get more letters about that than anything else, and we still get more phone calls about Deathmatches and level editors than about anything else.

*Doom* is far from dead and it's going to be with us for a long time.

### Oh my God!

I AM A REGULAR READER of your magazine and I have written to ask you to marry me. Failing that, perhaps you could answer a couple of questions.

1 I am a girl. Why do other girls write in and say that your magazine is targeted exclusively at men when I can read all of your long words and complicated phrases just fine.

I like *PC Zone*, these sad people obviously would not know a 486 if it bit them on the bum, and must have picked up *PC Zone* whilst rifling through the shelves whilst looking for *Bunty*.

2 You know in *Star Wars*... the movies, yeah? The princess is like, Luke's sister, Okay? With me so far? Now, was Darth Vader her father? And if so, surely that makes him the king to begin with (otherwise he couldn't be a princess) and if he was, how come Luke didn't know his daddy was a king. Also, if you were a king of the known universe, why would you go over to the dark side and attack your own people to try and win over what is actually yours in the first place?

3 Would that question perhaps have gone down a bit better with someone like Barry Norman instead?

Love you forever.

**Bridget Trezise, Salisbury**

Therefore, Vader is not a king at all. If I wanted to confuse you further I could go on to tell you that he is, in fact, a Dark Lord of the Sith... but that would complicate things still further and you'd have to read lots of books and become a complete *Star Wars* geek to understand.

### Mr Cursor offends...

Your Timmy Mallet wannabe contributor on the inside back cover has much to learn. It was certainly wise of him to issue a disclaimer to the effect that he didn't know what he was talking about, but apparently this ignorance extends to whomever else was responsible for the subtitle "He's been surfing the net". Does no-one in your office know the difference between the Internet and a bulletin board system? For a magazine that purports to offer information about computers (albeit of a highly selective nature) this is nothing short of stunning. In any event it is obliquely gratifying to learn that if all else fails it is still possible to eke out a living as a writer on a subject about which you know nothing.

What genuinely concerns me is the irresponsible nature of the piece. It is an unfortunate fact that children are inclined to misbehave, especially if encouraged. Users of systems such as CompuServe, who are old enough to have to pay for it, are also obliged to tolerate the sub-adolescent activities of those who either get it free, or who think that paying for it allows them to do with it as they please. The activities of Mr Cursor are, of course, a matter for his own conscience, but I am surprised that you should find it fitting to publish an article that revels in this type of behaviour and present it to an audience that is at an age that still finds the word "bollocks" amusing.

**Graham Stokes, Wiltshire**

Good grief. Mr Cursor has been running for two years now and it seems that there are still some people out there who "don't get it". The whole point of the Mr Cursor column is to present a satirical and sarcastic view of a certain aspect of PC entertainment "culture". Over the past two years the column has covered everything from strategy games to interactive multi-media encyclopaedias, and it has always commented on things in a way that many people think, but dare not say. Basically, it takes the piss. The character has been generated to be brutally frank and almost entirely ignorant.

At the moment there's an awful lot of attention in all manner of media about what is commonly referred to as "the net". I would say that a very high percentage of average, normal people are totally ignorant as to what "the net" actually is. To many, it is technophobia personified - it uses computers, phone lines and it's very scary. The Mr Cursor column simply illustrated that it isn't scary, and that it isn't as staid and boring as many people suspect. Although the real "net-freaks" are about the most anally-retentive people you'll ever meet, I'm sure they'd all agree that as well as being a culture and a useful tool, the net is also a source of fun. Yes, Mr Cursor was probably immature and irresponsible, but the people with whom he "interacted" had, and even e-mailed us later when they discovered what had been going on. Japery on Compu Serve...? What ever next? People might be having fun soon.





# Mr Cursor

HE'S AFRAID OF DIKES



IRST THIS MONTH, an anecdote. It's a true story which has reached me via a friend of a friend of a friend of an acquaintance of someone else - and so on. You know how these things are passed on. And possibly, this same story, via different routes, has by now spread about all over the place... so I apologise if you've heard it already.

But enough of all this pre-emptive stuff, and let's get going, before I lose the plot myself.

Okay, so there's this London bloke called Bob, and Bob's bought himself an extremely flash car. Exactly what make and model of car it is has been lost in the repeated telling of the anecdote, but I'm assured it's a very nice car indeed. Let's say it's a bright red Lambourghini Diablo. Good enough? It's worth about a zillion pounds and goes from nought to 60 in under one and a half picoseconds, apparently, so a Lambourghini Diablo sounds pretty close to me. Let's go with it.

But anyway, so Bob is in love with this car. It's left a previously rich bast rather skint, and has become his whole life. So what next?

Well, Bob works in an advertising agency type job, is well into visuals, just so happens to use a PC at work, and he has an idea. It's a bit of a show-offish idea, as you'll discover, but at the end of the day you have to realise that this idea is actually as much for Bob's own benefit as it is a platform for boasting to his office peers. So what is this idea?

Well, what Bob does next is this: He drives his Diablo hundreds and hundreds of miles to a pant-wettingly picturesque location. It's a fishing village on the west coast of Scotland, up near the top somewhere. Once there, he clamps his flashy camera onto his flashy tripod and embarks on an afternoon's frantic solo photo-shoot. Snap, snap, snap, snap. Move car to another position. Move tripod to another position. Snap, snap, snap, snap. Move car again. Move camera again. And on and on and on, until the sun has disappeared completely beneath the island studded horizon... and the jetty, lobster pots and drunken Scottish people are all veiled in a cloak of darkness.

Then Bob dismantles his flashy camera/tripod combo, slides the separate bits carefully into the Diablo's velvet-lined nearside storage compartment, slides his body into the driver's seat, closes the ostentatious gull-wing door, and drives home through the night. (At Mach 3, needless to say.)

Once home, he develops his own photos (he's that sort of bloke), chooses his favourite shot (low angle, setting sun, three fishing boats coming in, seagull perched on lobster pot, Diablo parked at impossibly rakish angle), thinks to himself how it looks just like a photograph from *Top Gear* magazine, and saunters happily to bed. (His wife - and this is a detail of my own making - sleeps in a separate room, and will divorce him three months hence.)

The next day, back at the office (and back to the genuine anecdote), Bob scans his photo and imports its digital counterpart, lovingly, into his PC. Yup, it's become his new *Windows* start-up picture, and the permanent backdrop for his work-screen. He then carefully rearranges all the

tiny programme icons so that they enhance the general effect rather than block out any "important" bits. Bob then engineers things so that his work mates have to look at his monitor for this reason or that reason.

Get the idea?

Yes. Bob's an arsehole. A bigtime bum-tunnel.

And, you'll be pleased to hear, it's a fact which doesn't escape his colleagues... so, that very evening, after Bob has gone home, several of the said workmates just so happen to stay back late. *Photoshop* japery is uppermost in their minds, and at least a couple of Bob's "chums" are highly-accomplished artists.

So night passed, morning happened, and Bob turned up for work again. He plonked himself smugly into his chair, turned on his monitor and... reeled back in shock and horror as the image materialised. Oh no! Aaaargh! The main background was as picturesque as it had been the day before; the sea still menacing, the fishing boats still coming in, and the semi-silhouetted seagull still nestling atop the lobster pot. But his beloved bright red Diablo? Right up there in the foreground? Parked at a rakish angle, and swollen, incidentally, through a fisheye lens? Er, the wheels were gone and it was up on bricks.

Excellent, eh? And true, true, true. End of anecdote and a hearty index finger in the air to Bobs all round the world. Full stop.

But now I haven't got much space left to talk about the flooding that happened around Europe a couple of months ago, so I'd better zip my sentences up a bit. Here goes. Message to Holland. You're constantly trying to claim low-lying land from the ocean. You've even got a gargantuan new drainage project underway up north. I say this to you: "STOP!" I add this: "BAD IDEA!". When Cologne flooded, it was excellent - just like Venice, but with much wider canals; canals you could get a cruise liner through. Superb. Way to go, let's hear it for the flood. But all that soggy Dutch farmland? Let it be, let it be. Your country is a crap shape and height, so admit it to yourselves and make the most of what's actually *above* sea level. If you need encouragement, then here's a simple three-line QBasic program to illuminate. It's a simulation of what the oceans have in store for the next two hundred years. (And you don't even have to understand QBasic - all you need to know is that "x" represents the sea level...)

DO: X=X+1: LOOP:

Sorry Holland, but don't blame me - I'm just the messenger. ■

(Right) The PC Zone Motoring Editor informs us that this is probably a Lambourghini Diablo. It is almost definitely a car though. Without any doubt in our minds we can say it is painted bright red. Very bright indeed.





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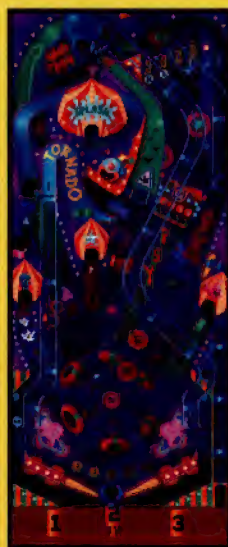


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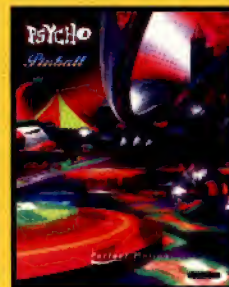
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